

FRANCES BRIDGES ATKINSON

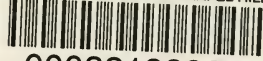


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FRANCES BRIDGES ATKINSON



Gladly your friend,
Frances B. Atkinson

FRANCES BRIDGES ATKINSON

A RECORD OF HER LIFE
PREPARED BY HER FRIENDS

FOREWORD BY
MARGARET E. SANGSTER

NEW YORK
NATIONAL BOARD OF THE YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1908

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*To
The Young Women of America
Whom Frances Bridges loved and for whom she toiled
This book is dedicated
In His Name.*

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FOREWORD

THE friend about whom the following pages have been written was a very incarnation of life and joy. The sunshine of her spirit made a brightness wherever she went. She was, in her own person, the realization of an ideal Christian woman who from childhood had belonged to the Master and who, day by day, poured out the rich fragrance of devoted service at His feet. Frances Bridges touched many lives throughout the short progress of her own. As a little daughter of the manse, she early won the hearts of her father's congregation, and there are those in Brooklyn who like to remember the dainty little figure and the sweet enthusiasm of the child who walked in the annual Sunday-school procession in which Brooklyn takes so much pride.

As a student at Smith College the charm of her winsome personality and the unobtrusiveness of her character individualized her in a large class where she was, without effort, a leader in everything that had to do with distinct and definite Christian work. There was never anything vague in her conduct, yet she made on no one an impression of anything

forced, rigid or austere. Her religious life was not divorced from her daily life; it belonged to her as the perfume to a flower. The most natural thing in the world was that this girl, wonderfully equipped by nature and grace to go forth as a young woman called to a ministry of love among other young women, should find her niche as a secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association. Peculiarly endowed with charm and repose, entirely free from self-consciousness, reaching easily the hearts of young and old, and splendidly magnetic, her work as secretary was everywhere followed by the divine blessing. Students and faculty alike welcomed her when, in the course of her work, she visited a college; managing boards in city Associations and girls in business life equally felt the magic of her presence, and at summer conferences she was always a radiant centre of warmth and light.

At the time of her happy marriage to the Rev. George H. Atkinson it is not too much to say that congratulations came to her and to him from every part of this great land, while thousands of hearts sent their good wishes and breathed their prayers for the bride as she entered on another phase of her womanly career. The word career is often criticised, and with most of us there is an unspoken feeling that somehow a career is incompatible with the sweetness and gentleness of household life, yet whoever may read this record must agree with me that in

the truest sense of the word Mrs. Atkinson's useful life, ending before she was thirty, deserved the name. She never thought of her life as anything beyond a daily and quiet performance of duty. She thought little of herself, a great deal of her work, much of her Master. No day of hers began without the morning watch. She rose early, that she might have her hour with Jesus; after that, every day and all day she gave herself, without stint, to the work she had in hand. She slurred nothing. Children loved her, old people found her adorable. Girls of all sorts and conditions were moved not only by her appeals, but by her presence, and made her their pattern. To live a life of sincerity and nobility out in the open, with Christ as the motive and meaning of it all, is to have the best career in these days of opportunity that is ever the province of woman.

In the short space of her married life, Mrs. Atkinson took up the multiform obligations that rest on the wife of a minister, and at once became the object of love and admiration that the mistress of the manse should be in her husband's parish. She stood at his side, helping him in every department. She had been too busy in other ways to learn much about housekeeping beyond its theory, but from the moment the bride entered the home she became a home-maker and nothing that she needed to know escaped her notice or study. Only five months and thirteen days were hers in this beautiful portion of

life. Swiftly, suddenly, unerringly, that Angel of the Shadow who opens the door for us into everlasting sunlight called her hence. One moment she was speaking to an audience of girls about choosing the better part. The arrow sharpened with love had pierced her, and before many hours she was at home with God.

It seems strange to us in these summer days to think that she is nowhere within our reach, that no letter of ours can bring to us one of her dear replies, that we cannot sit at her table, nor hear her speech, nor see the flashing of her smile. She is gone, and our human hearts yearn for the touch of the vanished hand and the sound of the voice that is still. Yet she has not gone very far away: her feet have trodden the starry path between the worlds: she is with her Lord, and, being with Him, she is not distant from us. It is not apart from what we have a right to hope to think that she may often be with us in our little meetings, in our larger audiences, as we go about our work; that she may be permitted some ministry of love to us whose eyes are too dim to see the forms of messengers from heaven. Wherever she is to-day, she is loving and serving still, she is not alone; she is one of a great company of friends. She has not forgotten any one for whom she cared here, or any work that ever enlisted her toil. She is herself in the other land, only a thousand times more herself, more alive, wiser,

blither, freed from the bondage of the flesh, able to serve with the swiftness of the spirit.

Many young women should own the simple story of this earnest life. The little book should go forth on a mission to the ends of the earth. There is not a daughter in any home, a student in any college, a young Christian worker in any Association, who would not be stronger and better for the inspiration and stimulus that the reading of these pages will give.

Not to praise our dear one, but to praise God for her and to continue the work she began, this little record has been lovingly prepared. It is lovingly commended to all young women in this and other lands.

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

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FRANCES BRIDGES, 1882

THE FIRST YEARS

THERE is necessary to the understanding of many a life an exposition of the times of which that life was a part. A past generation must be vitalized, its political, religious or domestic conditions must be reproduced to the imagination, if the reader catch ever so faint a vision of the life that moved amid these conditions. Every course of action, every revealed purpose, gains its true value only when interpreted by such exposition of a by-gone day. To a certain extent, everyone is a product of his age; all that he has met has entered into his character. This is true, even though in a larger sense individual character only records the differences between the varying impressions a generation makes upon separate men, each a different plastic medium.

The life of Frances Bridges Atkinson does not require for its illumination that the manners and customs of a long past generation should be revived. She was—she is—a part of the present, of her own generation, a generation full of significance for such

as she, for it offers a wide place to woman, it offers a high place to Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of women in all lands, and it insistently calls for women to take up a service for Christ which shall transform Christian believers into Christlike members of society.

But the generation alone was not an adequate cause for her life. Unselfishness, her most strongly marked trait, is hardly characteristic of the present day. The two constantly quoted sources of character, heredity and environment, have their place. Still, though her parentage and ancestry were of the best and the surroundings of her childhood and of her school and college days all that could be desired, other girls have had equal endowments of nature, equal advantages of moral and intellectual training, but equal results have not followed. The secret of her life—one may not say of her success in life, for what she did was, to her, merely the inevitable expression of what she was—the secret of her life, perhaps, is this: Simply and naturally when a child, and with enlarging intention and grasp as she grew older, Frances Bridges “chose the better part.” Deliberately, quietly, as she did everything, she studied into God’s law of obedience. She understood that when the word of Jehovah came “to keep all his statutes and his commandments that it might be well with thee,” this welfaring was not an extraneous reward, but an inherent part of obedience. Following God’s

course brought one out at God's intended goal, a better goal than man could devise. Walking in God's way meant a straight path, which led through duties and responsibilities and among people with claims upon sympathy and help, but it was a path of divine companionship and, therefore, better than any solitary self-selected road.

It was God's plan, one believes, that in her character obedience should result in the beauty of holiness, that shining purity, that absorption in spiritual things, "holiness unto the Lord in letters of light on her forehead." In another character, God has worked out as the inevitable result of that soul's obedience, courage, or power of leadership, or patience under suffering; for her, God made possible the beauty of holiness.

Frances Antoinette Bridges was born at number eighteen Woodbine Street, Brooklyn, New York, November eleventh, 1876. She was the oldest child born to her parents, Rev. William J. and Susan Gist Bridges. A son and a second daughter died in infancy. A third daughter, Margaret Dickson, was also born in Brooklyn.

At the time of her birth Mr. Bridges was pastor of the Greene Avenue Presbyterian Church, near Reid Avenue. This society had been organized two years before, and it called him as its first regular pastor in the spring of 1875. Mr. Bridges had only recently turned to the ministry from a business ca-

reer in his native city of Baltimore. Here he had been associated with his father, formerly of Georgetown, D. C. In this newly erected church the child was baptized, receiving the name Fannie, from Mrs. Fannie Haddon Earle, the wife of the superintendent of the Sunday-school in Greene Avenue Church, and the name Antoinette, from her mother's niece, Mrs. Antoinette Carter Hughes, wife of Governor Charles E. Hughes of New York, who had made her home with Mr. and Mrs. Bridges for some time before this.

As she grew up, the Sunday-school took a large place in her horizon. There were the old-fashioned Sunday-school Christmas celebration, and the Easter and Children's Day exercises. There was the annual Sunday-school parade, when children from all the Protestant schools in Brooklyn met at their own churches and filed out to form divisions and fall into line in the great procession, marching and countermarching before the reviewing stand, where stood the Mayor of Brooklyn and other guests of honor. The sight of thirty thousand children on a bright day in May, their white dresses, their fluttering flags and banners, their animated faces, the sound of the bands of music accompanying different sections of each division, and the treat of ice cream and cake awaiting the return of the procession, is never forgotten by anyone who has seen it. When the time had come for promotion from the Infant Depart-

ment, a class of five little girls, who came out together, was given to Mrs. Mary Wetzel, whose understanding of child nature and affection for the members of her class made her forever beloved by her pupils. Their offering was largest for Easter, they helped to collect aid for the Johnstown flood sufferers, they had summer outings together at Prospect Park and Manhattan Beach. It was Mrs. Wetzel's custom to ask for written comments on the lessons of the quarter before review Sunday, and Fannie Bridges, in her even, schoolgirl hand, wrote out her reasons for remembering the lessons on "Blind Bartimæus" or "The Timid Woman's Touch." Her loving little heart was delighted by the present of a chair sent to their Quincy Street home by this class as a surprise for her. Her account is graphic: "I called papa and he went to the door and brought it in. He was told the card inside would explain all, and after taking off I don't know how many papers and strings we came to the card which told that it was a present from you to me. Maggie had to sit down in it right away and say how 'comforbul' it was, and I have had to repeat what she said every time I sit in it."

All this time her soul was growing like a flower in the spring sunshine. People who knew her said that when she joined the church at the age of twelve she understood the meaning of the step and was trying to glorify her Savior in her daily living more

than many adults appear to do. The little girl had many a struggle—living up to high convictions is always hard ; but she recalled to a friend later in life, when working together with Sunday-school children, one of her own experiences :

“I made my first decision when I was about twelve years old. I found it very hard then to tell my difficulties to anyone, even my father, and so for several weeks I struggled by myself. I felt that I ought to try to sell among the people some religious books which had been spoken of at church. I had always been timid and held back many times from what I knew to be right because of what people would say. I do not think now that God particularly wanted me to sell those books, but He did want me to overcome that fear of other people’s opinions. Finally I went to my father and told him that I had made up my mind to do it. The doing of this thing was the first step toward conquering this fear, although I have to fight it in all my public work.”

She began making friends in the kindergarten and continued it in the public school she attended, Number 26, on Gates Avenue.

Shortly before Frances was fourteen, Mr. Bridges was called as pastor of the West Presbyterian Church of Bridgeton, New Jersey, where the family resided for the next thirteen years. From 1890 to 1894 Frances was a student in Seven Gables, a boarding and day school in Bridgeton, of which Mrs. F. F. Westcott was the principal. Even in this preparatory school her personality, her conscien-



FRANCES BRIDGES, 1894

tiousness and her love for Christian things were manifest. From this school she graduated as valedictorian of her class, obtaining the same honor she had won in her earlier school in Brooklyn. One of her most beloved teachers was an alumna of Smith College, the daughters of various family friends had been or were being educated there, and so it naturally came about that, in the spring of 1894, Frances went up to Northampton to take her entrance examinations for Smith College.

II

IN SMITH COLLEGE

FRANCES was just a sweet, natural little girl when, in the fall of 1894, she went up to Smith College to cast in her lot with six hundred girls from all parts of the world and from all sorts of homes.

There were those from the great cities who could boast already of wide social experience, and those whose sixteen or eighteen years had contained wonderful periods of foreign travel, or study in historic surroundings. There were many from the famous girls' schools, already familiar with some aspects of college life, and some of illustrious birth, with confident bearing, and with the pride of intellectual conquest already visible on their interesting faces, girls who promptly took front seats in classes and volunteered knowledge at the first opportunity.

Frances belonged rather to a possibly more enviable class, of whom also Smith possessed a goodly number, whose previous life had been passed within the shelter of a simple home in a town not so large as Northampton, a home where love and high-

mindful devotion to spiritual interests were the prevailing influences. She entered this somewhat bewildering new world a little shyly, it may be, but with the unconscious simplicity that was all her own, prepared to do in college just what she had always been doing, to work honestly and live to glorify the Lord Christ in every way. As at home so at college her Christian faith was the controlling force in her thought and attitude, and determined the manner and direction of her entire development.

We are fortunate in having been given a few first impressions. During freshman and sophomore years Frances lived in a private house on West Street, and this glimpse of her is given by another girl who lived there: "We certainly did have a jolly crowd, and Frances was a jolly girl. We certainly did not experience any loneliness or isolation from being off the campus—in fact, were not far enough from the campus to realize that we were not part of it. Frances was one of the first girls I knew at college, and I shall never forget how pretty she was the first time I saw her. She wore her beautiful brown hair in a long braid down her back, and her red cheeks were redder than the lining of the golf cape she wore. She was just entering the door at fifty-eight West when my mother and I saw and spoke to her, and from that day we were great friends. She had a good deal of fun in her, and while somewhat more serious at heart than some of the rest of us she knew

how to enter into any lark with zest. I well remember how we girls used to tease her. Frances did not believe in Sunday visits, so regularly every Sunday night we used to file up the two flights of stairs to her room, and the poor girl, being too friendly to tell us to go, was torn between her scruples and her cordiality, and it always ended in a general jollification.

“She was the best friend I ever had in college, the most steady and dependable. She was equally able to enjoy the stylishness of her huge balloon sleeves and to lead a college prayer-meeting. In those days she was not at all certain as to how long she could remain in college, and confessed to me she was going through ‘on faith.’”

An incident mentioned by the mother of one of the girls is significant. While visiting her daughter, this lady met the sweet-faced freshman and tells how one morning Frances entered the dining-room after breakfast was begun and, upon taking her seat, bowed her head for a silent grace. “It seemed a good deal for so young a person to do, where there were several others and older ones at the table, but it was a testimony for the Master.”

A classmate who became one of her most intimate friends was first attracted strongly by a remark made regarding Frances by another ninety-eight girl who had come from the same home town: “Frances Bridges is one of the most unselfish girls I have ever

known." "It was that remark," said her friend, "that made me long to know her."

"Her face was enough," adds another, "to cause the committee on freshman class prayer-meetings to choose her for one of the first leaders, and from that time on almost every topic-card bore her name." Referring to those early days, one of her teachers calls her "a reserved, beautifully-poised girl."

In scholarship Frances started in at an advantage, for she brought with her the evidence of a studious and industrious past. Her entrance examinations were creditable, and one, that in German, was so excellent as to win for her preparatory school the coveted privilege of entering its pupils in future upon certificate alone. She had no "conditions" and was handicapped by no shaky foundations.

Concerning the various studies that claimed her attention, it is noticeable that throughout the four years she studied rhetoric, literature and elocution, and also gave a good part of her time to German. The affectionate relation with the womanly head of the German department was one of the sweet and helpful influences which she afterwards recognized as important. The official records testify that all of her work was good, and some of it excellent. Her entire course was characterized by great thoroughness and conscientious devotion, and by the special depth that a thoughtful nature brings to all mental labors. Shortly after her entrance the college made

it possible for those who were candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Literature, by making up certain courses, to qualify as candidates for the classical degree of Bachelor of Arts. There were many who talked of making the change; Frances was one of the few who carefully and persistently worked at the difficult requirements until they were fulfilled.

As evidence of her reputation for good scholarship, coupled with warm personal regard, we may mention her election to the Phi Kappa Psi literary society. The Voice Club also claimed her, and came to count her possibly its most gifted member. She had a fine instinct for interpretation, as was natural to one so sympathetic in nature, and her soft-toned, musical voice supplied the appropriate medium of expression. For her last two years she held the offices of secretary and vice-president, respectively, in the Voice Club, of which the head of the elocution department was always president.

While Frances participated in a goodly share of the usual college activities, that for which she was best known, and by which her later career was most influenced, was her religious work. From the first she was a Christian worker. For at least one year she attended the Sunday-school connected with the Edwards Church, where she usually had a sitting and which she joined as the students do for the years of their college course, under Mr. Paul Van Dyke as pastor. She gave herself heartily to every op-

portunity offered by the organized Christian work among the students. Beginning in a quiet way by regular participation in her own class prayer-meetings, she rapidly became known until she was acknowledged to be one of the spiritual leaders of her class.

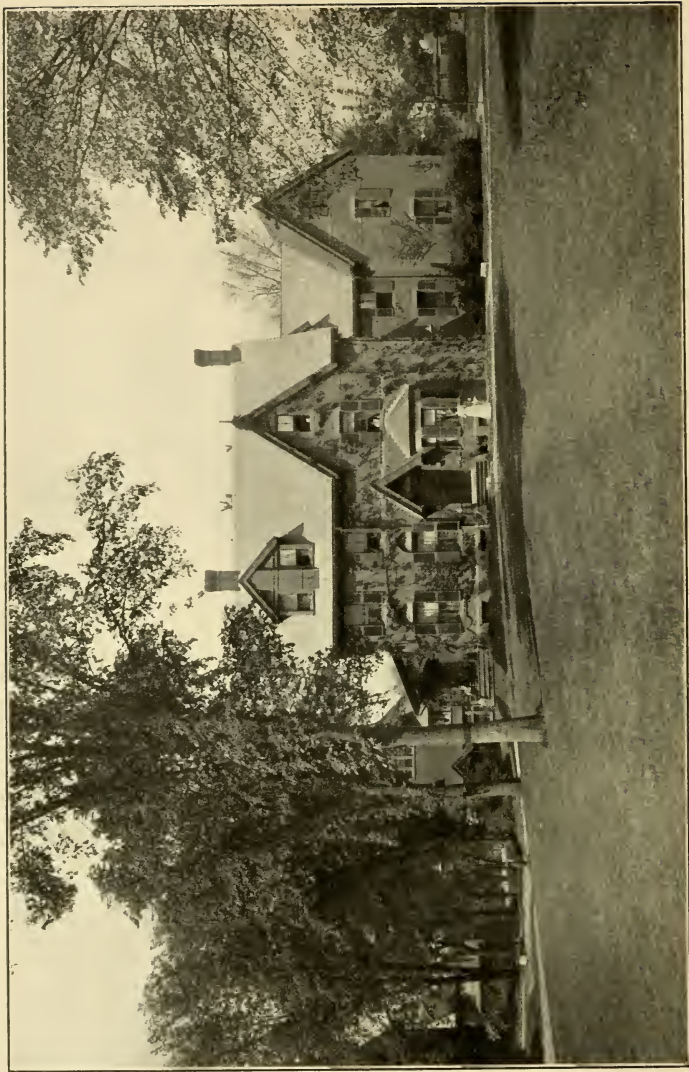
In the fall of 1896, the desire that had been growing for more than a year among the leaders of the Association for Christian Work, to bring about through prayer and endeavor a more broadly spiritual work, came to outward expression in several new lines, viz.: voluntary Bible classes led by students, a handbook for the aid of the entering class, and a weekly meeting of the cabinet for prayer and conference. In all of these enterprises Frances was given a prominent part.

She led one of those first Bible classes with great helpfulness to the members. She was on the committee which published the first handbook, and during both junior and senior years she served on the cabinet with distinct influence upon the spiritual tone of the meetings. In her senior year she helped to initiate another undertaking under the Association, the Students' Exchange, which peculiarly appealed to her wide sympathies by its offer of help to needy students. During the senior year she was also vice-president of the Association, and by virtue of that office was chairman of the religious work committee, the department that was ultimately responsible

for every religious meeting held by the students, exclusive of those under the Missionary Society, and probably that exerting the widest influence of any. The formation of the Christian Union that same year further illustrates how bound up she was with several of the most notably spiritual advance steps taken in the history of the Association. This organization marked the culmination of a feeling that had emerged from the increasing spirit of loyalty to Jesus Christ, and provided an opportunity for those who wished definitely to profess their belief in Him and desire for His service to enroll themselves. The definite organization was preceded in the previous year by a tentative expression of sympathy with such a sentiment to which many girls subscribed their names.

By virtue of her position on the cabinet, Frances had a leading part in the forming of the phrase adopted in 1897 and ratified by the organization the following year. The object, as expressed, was "the deepening of the Christ-life in ourselves and in the college."

Nowhere was her presence felt more profoundly than in the various prayer-meetings. In letter after letter we see how vividly her memory is associated with the upper room where, in those days, we used to meet, all the classes together, to pray and sing: "We may not climb the heavenly steps to bring the Lord Christ down," and to testify to the Love that



HATFIELD HOUSE, SMITH COLLEGE

we knew was holding us in the midst of all the new ideas that were forcing their way to controlling positions in our minds. One who was below Frances in college speaks of her in these prayer-meetings, "where she would speak so simply and earnestly of the Christ-life, and what fellowship with the Master meant to her. One could see it all in her beautifully sensitive, expressive face, and what she said always counted with us, because we knew she lived it." Another recalls lovingly "her sweet, earnest, prayerful face, and sweet pleading voice in prayer." Still another reverently says she felt that when Frances spoke in those meetings she seemed to see God's spirit in a human face.

The permanent and far-reaching influence upon her fellow students of these impressions is simply incalculable, and especially must their power have been great among the under-class girls whom Frances was always so eager to help, and "many of whom used to look up to her with an affection which had a touch of reverence in it."

But to stop with this description of her public activities would be to misrepresent her whose life consisted not so much in things that she did as in what she was. She impressed herself not more by definite work than by the things she loved and by the way in which she went about her daily tasks and entered into the passing moments of college life and fun.

What, then, were some of the other things that filled her life and made the world in which she grew into womanhood?

Prominent among inspiring influences, every student of Smith recognizes that distinguished man who has been its only president, and points to him as the prime cause of its great strength. Not only do the girls recognize the enormous debt of the college to his character and ability, but they universally acknowledge gratefully the power in their own lives exerted by his lofty ideals and rugged spiritual strength. In his fatherly spirit of gentle authority they find that which makes the college atmosphere a normal one for a girl's development.

Another question which every college student recognizes as of prime importance in determining the character of her college life is that of the particular campus house in which she will make her home. Each house has its individuality, and each its advocates who regard it as pre-eminently desirable. Frances was fortunate in being able to enter a house whose reputation was unexcelled in her day. The Hatfield was universally respected for its share of brains and true aristocracy, and counted among its girls a large number of the most attractive and gifted in college. Thus, junior and senior years gave Frances rare opportunities for forming friendships of a valuable character, and for gaining that rich culture that one obtains only through close con-

tact with many kinds of girls, whose varied tastes and greatly differing ideas are influenced by high breeding and earnest purposes. The college which claimed Frances possesses in its student body the advantages that flow from wealth wisely used, and from a nobly educated ancestry; and it would be hard to find a better environment in which to place a girl already suited to it by a beautiful home experience.

It is undeniable that Frances had a genius for friendship. She loved many and she loved them deeply, because she looked for no flaws and with her sweet sympathy penetrated to the lovable element in every one she touched. The girls from Bridgeton especially was she ever eager to help, and she felt a personal responsibility for their college careers.

There was one who lived in a house at some distance from her own with whom Frances had come into contact early in her course. This girl was extremely diffident and found it impossible to overcome her reserve and make one of the jolly group about her. Soon, as was natural, the girls grew weary of trying to draw her out, and it is to be feared left her pretty much to herself, losing, by this thoughtless neglect, acquaintance with a character of depth and refinement. But, obeying her instinct to penetrate beneath the surface, Frances followed up her freshman acquaintance, and pursued a friendship that lasted until the other was removed by death

early in her sophomore year. The significance of this incident became apparent to a few when it was learned that the shy girl's letters to her mother had disclosed terrible loneliness throughout her college life. Among her friends Frances always counted that mother who appreciated deeply the sweet insight into her daughter's real character.

Her friends were not confined to those of her own age, and probably her training as a minister's daughter supplemented her natural tendency to affiliate with older women. Her teacher in Sunday-school, an elderly lady of rarely sweet character, became one of her valued friends. The residents of the Old Ladies' Home knew her as a frequent visitor. And many others, of various ages and conditions of life, all sorts of people, among whom were many of the afflicted, recognized in her one who entered into their lives with love that knew no barrier nor false distinction, love that was but the irresistible outflow from the Christ-life within.

It would have been impossible for her to confine her love to those who, through congenial temperament alone, might be supposed to be fitted for personal friendship. While entirely loyal and devoted to these, she gave herself with whole-hearted fidelity to all who needed her. She was incapable of shallow, indiscriminating friendship, and equally incapable of a formal philanthropy arising from mere pity. Hers was charity in all the fulness of the

original sense of love. She loved because love was the spontaneous expression of her consecrated nature, and because she was actually able to see in every one who touched her life the real and beautiful element which made that one attractive to her.

Although naturally reticent, she talked freely to those nearest to her of the things that deeply interested her. To some she was in the habit of reading aloud from the great masters of literature, especially from Browning. One friend says: "Her natural transparency of character was all the more clearly impressed in her reading."

Her enjoyment of poetry and of music was intense, and she appreciated the rich opportunities afforded by the college with all the warmth of her strongly artistic nature. Wholly unspoiled, she took a fresh interest in everything. A visit to Boston with a classmate during a vacation was enjoyed keenly, and the musical treat included gave her the greatest joy for a long time afterward. She loved the jolly parties and all the good times with the zest of a wholesome girl whose tastes are in process of healthy growth. Her spirit was unusually open to the joy and sparkle and gayety pervading college life. In later years she used laughingly to say that she "never could see a joke," and it was true that it was very easy to tease her, because she was too innocent to suspect any one; but every one loved her too much to take unkind advantage of that, and she

certainly had a great amount of fun in her sunny nature.

Frances developed very greatly during her college life in her appreciation of the beautiful—of music, pictures and nature. This growth was apparent in her different college rooms, as the later ones bore marks of more discriminating taste and stronger feeling. "I remember," writes one, "when she got the idea that one might imitate nature's coloring at the various seasons in one's clothes, and got a brown and red dress for autumn, and a light brown dress trimmed with pale green the following spring."

The beauty of her surroundings entered largely into her life. The glorious mountains, those "hills with purple shadows," the winding river and the broad meadows of the Connecticut Valley—she felt them with all her deep capacity for the beautiful, and realized their power to enlarge one's sense of sacred things, and to ennoble and crowd the heart with mysterious joy. One tells how she used to go with her to a certain spot "where one looks off to Mount Tom, over the broad sweep of the meadows, called by Frances 'the looking-off place.'"

When a very innocent girl whose life has been singularly protected enters a large cosmopolitan college it is natural that there should be some painful experiences of revelation, and Frances met the inevitable. There were some shocks, too, when she found herself in close contact with some whose standards

and principles differed widely from her own. But her childlike faith carried her through all of these surprises without any personal loss, either of gentleness or of conviction. The study of Biblical Criticism, while it provoked much earnest, possibly anxious, questioning, left no troublesome doubt nor uncertainty regarding the rest for her own soul. Belief in God was in her a personal relation, a devotion of her entire self to a Heavenly Father whose voice she knew, and whose touch upon her spirit was too constant to be lessened or appreciably increased by intellectual modifications.

It is probable that the largest result of all these revelations concerning varying standards, either practical or theoretical, was an intensified sympathy with all whom she met, for it is certain that in talking with her in after-years those who did not share her own convictions felt no shadow of intolerance.

Her uncommon personality, its other-worldliness, made her universally loved and honored, although, it is true, some thought her dreamy. But one classmate denies that she was really visionary, and several call attention to the forceful, practical manner in which she filled her various offices. She was simply not "troubled about many things." "Her mind was fixed on the one thing she wanted to do, and she could not be diverted from it, nor distracted by lesser things."

The quiet, even movement of her life, its perfectly

simple, steady unfolding, constituted possibly its most unique beauty. It will be best to leave further remarks about this and other facts of her character to certain of her friends who knew her well and have written as follows :

“The most striking thing about her college life, as I look back at it, was the beautiful way she developed from a child to a woman during those four years. Of course we were all growing up together, and yet in Frances the process was so clearly defined and so beautiful that some of the rest of us seemed to be standing aside and watching it. In her freshman year she was a dear, shy little country girl; in her senior year she was a lovely, well-poised woman, conscious of her powers, without having lost a bit of that wonderful childlikeness of spirit which I think she would have kept unspoiled if she had lived to be an old woman. Surely it was that which Jesus meant in Luke 18:17. (Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.) . . . Her spiritual life was just a gradual unfolding and deepening without any upheaval, such as many pass through. . . . In her freshman year her faith was just the simple unreasoning one of a little girl. She left college with a woman’s grasp of things unseen. It just came quietly through a natural growth.”

“As I think of it, it seems as if it (her life) was a wonderful example of what might come to a child whose whole life had been surrounded and filled with the ideals and teachings of Jesus Christ, an assurance that struggles and trouble of mind are not necessary for growth, that the ideal life is not confined to those who have great ex-

perience, that joy and love and careful shielding in the home do not necessitate a selfish character. Her own sunshine seemed merely to throw light on others, not to make them seem more in the shadow. . . . It is very easy to think of her in the Father's house—she would be at home there."

"I knew her very little in college, but I was impressed with her sweet spirit and the sincerity of her religion. I knew her only in the class room, and there I remember her sweet Christian spirit was shown often in her interpretation of passages of poetry."

"After we graduated we went to Northfield together. It was the first experience for us both, and to Frances it was one of the sweetest and most wonderful of experiences. It was more inspiring and helpful than anything that she had ever imagined. But she took it all in the same quiet, calm way that she always took everything. . . . She did not go to all the meetings; she planned to be alone to pray. I remember one night while we were there she and I were suddenly told of a great sorrow that had come to one of our dearest friends. I remember how impossible it was for me to sleep, and how it seemed to me that my heart would break as I thought of the anguish that had come to one whom we loved, while Frances slept as quietly and as peacefully as a little child, knowing that the comfort that we could not give, God would give, and believing that He was giving it. Just before we graduated we were both asked if we would go to Turkey, and after the conference we both considered the question of volunteering. We were both very anxious to volunteer, but so many questions came in, chiefly of our duties toward our homes. . . . Frances was never able to volunteer, but facing the question and having to decide

it brought her face to face with God in a way that she had never come before, and did very much to prepare her for the great work before her. She learned how to pray in a deeper way than before and how to let God decide all for her."

"Her chief characteristic seemed to me a wonderful childlike trust. I remember one hot day at Northfield, when others of us who had responsibilities were nervously anxious over things going wrong, as we thought, coming in on Frances who had prayed with us, and who had then left it all and gone peacefully to sleep like a baby. We stood and looked at her, and it was a lesson to us."

"She had learned the quiet restfulness of prayer—nothing was too great to attempt and nothing too small to do—because all was guided and done by God in her."

"She had a most precious way, both at Northfield and in college, of sharing with me some new truth, . . . and in those moments her beautiful face seemed to have the very light of the Mount of Transfiguration on it. . . . Three such occasions stand out in my memory. One was when Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall was at college and, in a private conversation about our witnessing for Christ in college, he called our attention in his own inimitable way to Jeremiah 20:9. (And if I say I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain.) I remember well the expression on her face at that moment as well as the way in which she spoke of the verse for weeks afterward. Another time was at Northfield when she had been having a talk with Dr. (now



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Bishop) McDowell, in which he had spoken to her of Revelation 2:17. She came back to me with her face all aglow, her eyes full of tears, and a sort of awe in her face and in her voice as she said: 'Think of it!—a name that no one knows but He and I.' Again at Northfield, as we were walking together, she told me how, that morning, she had been reading Matthew 12:50 and said: 'Isn't it wonderful that He should have said "Sister"! I am so glad He did, for I know what that means.' And all the tenderness that characterized her home-life seemed crowded into her tone as she said it."

"She was so modest and so truly humble that I know she would have shrunk from the idea of having a book written about her, but she would have put aside that personal feeling if she had felt sure that such a book would be the means of leading other girls to give themselves more completely to the Master whom she so devotedly loved. . . . One cannot speak of one's relations with her in the past tense, somehow, as if her life were ended.

'And doubtless unto her (thee) is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of Heaven.'"

III

EARLY WORK

FIRST the student, then the teacher. Many and many a young girl, closing the four years' routine of college, longs to return for graduate study. This is partly because in her last undergraduate months the array of subjects not included in her own course seems so inviting and so indispensable that she is reluctant to leave without acquaintance with them, and partly because she fears the plunge into the outside world. But there is a graduate school richer in opportunities than any beloved *alma mater* or the most generously endowed university. It is the school of actual responsibility in which one becomes "master" of herself, of her surroundings, and of the approaches to the hearts of those dependent upon her. This is unusually true when the first work is that of teaching, for if the primary object of study is to acquire information, the exhaustive research necessary to present a subject to a class informs the teacher far better than did her first encounter with the subject as a student, and if a second object of study is discipline to

the mind of the one who undertakes it, directing the study, or inducing study of pupils, secures a far greater discipline to both mind and spirit.

This was Frances Bridges' experience also. In the autumn of 1898 she entered the Pennsylvania School of West Philadelphia as teacher of Latin and elocution. Her courses in college, as well as membership in the Voice Club, had served as preparation for part of this work, as also had the reading aloud, of which she and the friends who listened to her were always extremely fond. She did not reside wholly at the school, for Bridgeton was so near that she ran home for the week-ends, yet she gained a strong hold on her young pupils who clearly discerned her gentleness, her characteristic kindness and the fineness of her nature. Not only the students but her colleagues in the teaching staff recognized her as one of the most sincere, yet unobtrusive, of Christians, because she did not criticise or exhort, but lived simply and sincerely in her relations to all about her.

The spring term closed early enough to allow attendance at the Northfield Summer Conference, again a time of receiving personal spiritual help and of ministering to others. During this conference one of the leaders organized a prayer group of some of the more earnest Christians, to pray for generous giving to the Association movement. They met every evening, and Miss Bridges' confidence in

God and His readiness to answer prayer was strengthened by the unprecedented results of the public finance meeting. For the first time in the history of the Young Women's Christian Association, one gift provided for the support of one traveling secretary, and other large subscriptions were made. This was the beginning of a regular prayer circle on behalf of financial needs. Miss Bridges suggested the names of various friends who might like to receive letters stating the calls as they arose, and who would join in the united intercession. There are many who believe that some of these early financial successes were due, in part, to Frances Bridges' prayers.

She wrote to a friend after leaving the conference of how it had blessed her and what things helped her most, and that this thought had come to her as she had meditated :

"Your life from now on will show if the blessing has been great and you have received it with humility. Then the coming days will find you strong and unflinching in your belief and work, because of your utter and honest dependence upon God. But if instead, in these summer and fall and winter days, Christ does not find you so conscious of your own sin and weakness that you are constantly crying to Him for help, then the good that you took from Northfield was a mere sham and hypocrisy. So the year is going to show—is it not?—just how close and intimate was our friendship with Christ at Northfield. It would be a terribly solemn thought—it is solemn, but it

would make me desperate or indifferent—were it not that God is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us faultless before His presence with exceeding joy.”

The year 1899-1900 was spent with her parents and sister in Bridgeton, where she was a telling example of what the eldest daughter of the manse might be. The “art of being lovely at home,” in which art she was most highly accomplished, is nowhere so beautiful as in a clergyman’s family. Hospitality, sympathy, patience, inspiration for personal and organized efforts, are all naturally sought here, and can be found only when all the members of the family are united in making their home a place in which Christ is honored by the spirit of the daily routine.

This was before the days of universal mission study in the women’s and young people’s societies; in fact, it was only a few years after the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions had planted the idea of mission study classes firmly in the colleges, through the instrumentality of Professor Harlan P. Beach, the editorial secretary, and Horace Tracy Pitkin and other traveling secretaries, of the Movement. But Frances recognized, even then, how the “belief in missions” that every normal Christian will admit, might be converted into interest by proper cultivation. So she gathered the young ladies of the church every Saturday evening, and read for a couple of hours from missionary books, while the

hearers were free to do needle-work, or simply to listen, as they preferred. This scheme met with great success at the time and bore fruit in later years.

She entered willingly the various avenues of church work and found time for individuals, particularly for old ladies kept at home, who never could cease talking of Miss Fannie and how she used to come to see them. There was a poor boy whom she taught alone in Sunday-school and started in the right paths of life. The teacher into whose class he went after Frances' departure said that his family kept the photograph of this first beloved teacher on the parlor table as the most precious ornament in the room, and that she was always given an opportunity to admire it when calling at the home. The boy one day asked the second teacher for her picture to put in the same room, but added, with the candor born of loyal devotion and reverence: "But it won't be nowise so pretty as Miss Bridget's."

One writer of biography asserts that the account of a human life is the record and analysis of its crises. These understood, everything is understood. But that theory is hardly ample enough for general application, since some of the fullest lives do not contain great crises. The solution of the most important problems is simple for them, a general trend of thought and action, different courses possible, and all in harmony with this general trend. One

course, impracticable "for the present," as we say, another course immediately possible. Thus the way is plain. That Frances Bridges should be identified with some form of distinctly Christian service was so natural that her friends expressed no surprise, simply commented on her choice of fields, when she decided to enter the secretaryship in the Young Women's Christian Association. As is known, she had been intimately connected with the Smith College Association for Christian Work and had come into touch with the broader movement through the Northfield Conference and in other ways, and she had discussed most seriously the question of offering for foreign mission service; but as this step did not seem wise to her parents at the time, she believed it was not God's will for her then, and so was free to choose a field at home. Another Smith alumna, Miss Bertha Condé, of the Class of 1895, who was at the time, 1900, one of the traveling student secretaries for the American Committee of Young Women's Christian Associations, was so certain that Miss Bridges had in her character and spirit great possibilities as a student secretary that she went to Bridgeton to persuade her to enter this movement. The field of the Southern colleges was definitely laid before her, and in the spring of 1900 she was introduced to the Asheville Conference as the traveling secretary for the Carolinas, for the Gulf States, including then Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi

and Louisiana, and for Tennessee and Kentucky. Early in October of that year she went to Chicago, the headquarters of the American Committee, where a conference of several days was held for a number of secretaries going for the first time into Association positions. And with that brief insight into the technical part of her duties she started out upon her long journeys among the educational institutions for women of the Southland. As she was leaving home, her mother said with solicitude: "Frances, what will you do, traveling alone?" "God will take care of me," was her answer.

The possibilities of such a work as she thus entered upon are past computation. The conditions in no two schools are identical, but in each the student Young Women's Christian Association must be unique in its survey of its own field and its efforts to supplement the Christian work already done by the faculty or other organizations. This Association, composed of volunteer workers, students and faculty, and officered by the undergraduates, has, because of its intercollegiate relations, two strong allies. One is the traveling secretary in her visits to the colleges; the other is the summer conference which the members attend. In the conferences the score of leaders, speakers, Bible teachers and secretaries share for ten days the burden of advising in the many matters referred to them. But the traveling secretary stands almost alone during her visit

of brief duration, when her counsel is sought by the faculty, by members of the cabinet, as the committee chairmen and officers are called, and by individual girls. In nearly every instance the point of view of the outsider, as well as of the mature Christian, is sought, and for this reason she is unable to ask counsel even upon the subject matter thus confided to her, lest the identity of the person involved might be revealed to teacher or fellow-student. These personal interviews grew, year by year, to claim a very considerable share of Miss Bridges' time, although it is frequently supposed that conferring with committees and holding public meetings are the primary features of such a visit. In the religious services which she led, usually giving a talk based almost entirely on Scripture statements, she had a chance to arouse the attention of young women to the idea that there was such a thing as an enviable Christian life, and that possibly this young woman now speaking might be able to explain definitely about it. In other public addresses she linked the local Association, perhaps a struggling society and one to which even its members were indifferent, to the World's Student Christian Federation, which embraces the sixty thousand members of student Associations in the United States and the women in the student Unions of Great Britain, the European continent, Asia, South Africa, and Australia. She helped them to realize their part in the World's

Young Women's Christian Association, with its four hundred thousand members in every quarter of the globe. In her committee meetings she counseled with each committee about the means of reaching its own purpose; it may be the surest way of making the religious meetings forceful, or the Bible study vital, or the missionary giving generous, or the social life of the women students more cordial. Through the public meetings comes inspiration, through the committee meetings comes the suggestion of channels of usefulness, but in the personal interview the young girl or the woman student determines to act upon the vision set before her in the public address, and through the decision reached in the interview she commits herself to God and lays hold of His power for accomplishment.

As Miss Bridges entered a school, she went as a representative of Jesus Christ, from whom her call had come, and with whom she spent the first hour of every day. This security gave her a poise that was never disturbed by circumstances, but which could adapt itself to those in which she was placed. She came into the small colleges with an open spirit, ready to appreciate and be pleased, and with a sincere interest in the school, its location, equipment, patronage, the problems of its faculty, and the desires of its students. She came into the larger colleges with a dependence upon God that shut out the difficulties bulking themselves before her. She knew

that at the right time, either during her visit or afterward—it was immaterial to her—God would open out, far beyond these difficulties, broad reaches of usefulness to the Association and a place of enlargement for each seeking Christian girl. It seemed as if her philosophy were this: That in any situation God would give her, in answer to prayer, power for what He expected her to do there. Work which she could not accomplish, if she were conscious of His presence, either was not hers to do or not to be done by her at that time.

The attitude she held towards institutions was paralleled in her relation to individual young women. No girl was too obscure to gain her attention, and no college woman was too strongly entrenched in her own intellectual pride, or the defense of some strange new man-made religion, to fail to recognize that Miss Bridges must have grounds for her faith that might at least be looked into.

Beginning with October, 1900, she visited in order Weaverville College, the Asheville Normal and Collegiate Institute, Asheville College for Women, Greensboro Female College, Peace Institute, and six other institutions in North Carolina; Limestone, Converse, and Due West Colleges in South Carolina; Lucy Cobb Institute, the State Normal School at Athens, Brenau College, and six others in Georgia; thirteen in Tennessee, including the cluster of institutions in Nashville, and thirteen in Kentucky.

During the spring of 1901, the eighth biennial convention of the Associations affiliated with the American Committee met in Nashville, for the first time being entertained by one of the Southern Associations. Because of her acquaintance with the schools and students in that vicinity, Miss Bridges rendered particularly valuable service on that occasion. It was the first time she had met with representatives of the whole Association field, and those who first saw her there recorded a distinct impression that the power of this young woman would be felt as she became more experienced. This convention was followed by a tour in Alabama, Georgia, and the Carolinas, and by her second attendance upon the Asheville Conference.

When the thought of a Southern Conference was first projected, in 1895—it was held that year in Rogersville, Tennessee—this objection was brought forward: "The plan of gathering a company of college girls for a ten days' meeting may do in the North, where the students are older and accustomed to traveling to college alone, but our Southern girls could hardly go without chaperones, and that would be impossible to arrange for any large number of delegations." But the impossible which happens so frequently as to become probable, happened in this instance, to the great advantage of all concerned. Each college represented sent a woman teacher interested in Christian things as the chaperone of its

delegation, and this company of faculty members, larger and more significant than in any other of the summer conferences, has developed to be the strength of this conference and of the various state committees, and the key to Association permanence in scores of colleges throughout the South. The Southern Conference has other distinctive qualities. It has always been located high up in the mountains, where sunrise is a glory, and the coming on of evening a call to reverence and adoration. The attendant body is always composed of younger girls than those present at the other conferences, and the graciousness of voice and manner of this great company of Southern girls can never be forgotten. It is little wonder that those who participate in the conferences, year after year, are always happy to be assigned to Asheville.

Because Frances Bridges' own spiritual force had increased mightily at a summer conference, she longed to see members of every Association entering into this vital atmosphere. She knew well that hardly a girl ever returned home without a larger outlook of mind and an increased love to God and to her neighbors, even though for the first time she realized that these "neighbors" might be in the uttermost part of the earth.

In the second year in the South the first four months were spent in the Gulf States, and after attendance upon the Student Volunteer Movement

convention at Toronto, Canada, the last of February, 1902, she made a tour of the Associations in North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The year closed with the Asheville Conference.

Results of many kinds were manifest in these visits. At one place a Bible class was organized among the interested faculty women; in other institutions there were several girls who gave their hearts to God for the first time. In another place the college president said: "In these years that the Association has been in my school the discipline has been an increasingly easy matter," and other presidents and faculty members bore testimony to the good scholarship and deportment, as well as the fine Christian character, of the Association girls.

Again and again she was gratified to find how the Association was gaining a place of respect in the eyes of faculty and students generally. She was also delighted to see how the students brought the secretary, in her visits, into touch with the young women who most needed some word of personal counsel.

In one college, in a visit of seven days, in addition to her public addresses and the meetings with committees, personal interviews were held with twenty-two girls. As a result of those interviews four united with the church, and others, already professing Christians, declared they knew for the first

time Christ as their Savior. Every such outpouring of God's Spirit she was prompt to recognize as an answer to prayers that had been definitely made.

In many institutions the words "Young Women's Christian Association" were synonymous with a weekly prayer service of more or less interest, but she endeavored to convince the members of such an Association that the religious meeting was only the center, not the entire circle, of Association life, and that the Association that would most glorify God was one through which the very purpose of every life in the college would be deepened and lives be absolutely changed. The meeting might help individuals, but the individuals should go out from the meeting and help others.

Because of this wholesome spiritual influence she won her way, so far as is known, in every school and college. The first appeal was almost invariably made by her beauty and the charm of her personality. This led to an interest in the work she represented and to the Master whom she served.

One wrote of her :

"Some years ago I was very much attracted to Miss Bridges, and she won the love and admiration of every girl in our school. This is the experience of dozens of other schools she visited. By mere acquaintance we knew that her religion was her life, and by contact with her all were obliged to feel the influence of her purity and consecration."

A teacher in a college where Miss Bridges had organized an Association some years ago, wrote, in regard to the possibility of securing a resident secretary for their institution:

“Our president, who is deeply interested in the matter, will call on you and ask for a recommendation. He’ll tell you he wants a secretary just like Miss Bridges. She was his ideal of a Young Women’s Christian Association worker, as she was of many others. A winsome, tactful woman, who would appeal to these students, would have a field of influence well-nigh unlimited.”

A state chairman, in considering the recommendation of a secretary to a large university, remarked:

“It makes no difference whom we send, she can’t measure up to the standard they have set for their secretary, Frances Bridges. She is the only one they can ever remember, the only one that ever made a real impression there.”

A gentleman who has been president of a woman’s college for nearly a score of years, in speaking of the reason of her permanent influence, said:

“Miss Bridges appealed to our girls more than any woman who has ever come to our college. Nearly all the able women whom our girls know as teachers or secretaries either seemed too intellectual or too absorbed in religious affairs to seem natural, or at least to make the girls want to be like them. But Miss Bridges was so womanly and unaffected, her type of mind and of Chris-

tianity was so cordial and lovable, that she seemed like one of themselves; far above them, no doubt, but of the same kind. Our girls said they did not want careers, but just to be useful women in ordinary places, and they felt sure that Miss Bridges would marry and make a beautiful home and have the kind of a life they could all imitate."

Such elements as brought success in her early tours were present all through her life as a secretary. Every detail was worked out in prayer, or rather, she depended on prayer to determine these details. To a state secretary, in whose territory she visited some years later, she writes:

"I understand that you have requested some visitation for your denominational colleges. A great many things are crowding in now, so I pray that we both may have God's own wisdom in the selection of the colleges to be visited, that the ones may be selected which you feel need such help most keenly."

And this to a university for which dates had been set:

"I cannot begin to tell you how it rejoices me to know of the preparation you are all making. We are sure God is going to bless and answer the expectations and prayers that have come to you from Him, along with a vision of the need. The thought of the large opportunity and the great need almost frightens me. I am still very thankful for the opportunity to give the kind of talk you suggest. I know some of you are praying very earnestly about this, and I want to suggest that you pray mightily that the

Word of God may have free course and run and be glorified."

To another college :

"I understand some of you girls have had a most earnest desire for a spiritual awakening. I wish I might hear from you just as soon as possible about your work, and also about the plans you have made or are expecting to make. Then I will know what to do. I wish you to tell me something about the spirit among the girls toward the Association, what your greatest needs are, and what are the difficulties. How much detail help and how much interested support do you count on from your faculty? I judge from what I already know that they are very loyal to the work. I don't want to know so much about the organization as about the atmosphere in the college and the attitude toward Christian things. I know you have been praying about this visit, but I want to urge, before you go any further, that you shall ask God to show to you individually what He wants from this visit, and I will ask Him, and let us pray also that if there is anything in the life of any one of us that will hinder this blessing He will take it away, and may we be honest in giving Him that right. Then we can pray with importunity."

She was most careful to use time and strength to the best advantage, as can be seen by her comments on a proposed schedule :

"I rather think because you have put the gospel meeting at the chapel hour that you were planning to have it a union meeting. Is that so? Because I would rather not have that. I feel very sure, and so do our other workers,

that in any evangelistic work we can have very much stronger, more lasting results if the young women are by themselves, or the young men by themselves. I fear, too, that the schedule is too crowded—from the point of view of the very girls we wish to reach, as well as from the point of view of my own strength. I would gladly do as much work; but I do not believe as good results will come from having as many meetings. I would like to ask, too, just what was to be the nature of the noon prayer-meeting. I believe that it would be better to let that 12:00-12:30 hour be given up to those girls who would be most interested in doing personal work and to let me have a personal workers' class every day at that time; then I could train the girls, I would think, into doing the very work that I want them to do in helping me in these evangelistic meetings, and especially in conserving the results of the visit. For the way in which you keep up the interest after a secretary is gone is almost as important, or next in importance to the value of the secretary's visit in itself. Besides, I think that if we announce so many meetings for all the students it will overwhelm some girls who are very busy, and it will make more indifferent still some of the indifferent girls. So I would like to suggest that there be just one evangelistic meeting each day, and I will leave you to choose the time for it. In addition to that, I shall be very glad to teach this personal workers' class, and I will be very glad to meet socially, as you have planned, the girls and the wives of the faculty, and very glad to give that time on Saturday night to talking the matter over with the faculty. And I see no reason why I should not meet with the two Bible classes. But I trust that you will understand again if I say that I would rather not lead the union Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association meeting."

She also studied very carefully into the conditions at a college that might hinder spiritual growth or freedom in aggressive effort. In regard to one Association, she admits :

“There are two factions of girls here, just about at swords’ points, and they have let this bitter spirit come first in the Association. I go there with the purpose of working for a deeper, truer Christian life, rather than of attacking this special problem, praying for discernment and the Spirit’s power.”

She also had unusual courage for a person of her humility and modesty. Of one very prominent college, where the Association had not long been established, she writes :

“This one year has gained for the Association the interest and confidence of an increasing number of the faculty, and has made it more and more a factor in the student life, though it is not yet what it should be. Through it, too, in part, certain wholesome religious influences have been thrown about the whole college, as the added half-holiday, to do away with Sunday studying, and the compulsory chapel service, which is responded to most loyally. Probably, also, as a result of the talk the president of the college and I had together, some plan will be adopted to increase the church attendance.”

At another college, where the faculty are devoted Christians and most loyal in their intelligent and active sympathy, and where the organization was in

very good general order, she was able to touch again certain vital points. In their fear of a false, or at least misguided, evangelistic spirit in the Association, there had been a discouragement of the doing of personal work, or of any training for it. Sabbath studying was also carried to excess. The president and his wife, in personal conversation, asked for any criticisms or suggestions of the student life, and she courageously mentioned both of these as hindering the deepest spiritual development. They immediately took into consideration the change of the weekly holiday to obviate any apparent necessity for Sabbath studying.

Before starting out on a tour, she tried, if possible, to work out the addresses which would be called for. Her preparation was most careful. Her papers are full of jotted memoranda, like the following:

“Suggested verses on topics for talks in Religious Meetings:

1. The Best. 1 Corinthians 9:24 (last clause).
2. Humility. ‘He must increase, but I must decrease’”;

and on the reverse of the sheet:

“And it was to them that Paul brought a gospel that would humble, ‘to the Greeks, foolishness.’ Men must be brought low before God that they may recognize His greatness. The Christ who was crucified in weakness, liveth through the power of God, and was showing His power in their lives. ‘Finally, brethren, be perfected, be

comforted, be of the same mind; live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you.' ”

She kept a commonplace-book, filled with suggestions and quotations that might be of use in her addresses. Among them are these verses from Richard Watson Gilder and George MacDonald :

“If Jesus Christ is a man
 And only a man—I say
 That of all mankind I will cleave to Him
 And to Him will I cleave always.

“If Jesus Christ is God
 And the only God—I swear
 I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
 The earth, the sea, and the air.”

“THE INDISPENSABLE CHRIST

“I am so weak, dear Lord, I cannot stand
 One moment without Thee;
 But oh, the tenderness of Thy enfolding,
 And oh, the faithfulness of Thy upholding,
 And oh, the strength of Thy right hand—
 That STRENGTH is enough for me.

“I am so needy, Lord, and yet I know
 All fulness dwells in Thee;
 And, hour by hour, that never-failing treasure
 Supplies and fills in overflowing measure
 My last and greatest need, and so
 Thy GRACE is enough for me.

“It is so sweet to trust Thy word alone;
I do not ask to see
The unveiling of Thy purpose, or the shining
Of future light on mysteries untwining;
Thy promise-roll is all my own—
Thy WORD is enough for me.

“There were strange soul-depths, restless, vast and broad,
Unfathomed as the sea—
An infinite craving for some infinite stilling;
But now Thy perfect love is perfect filling;
Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord, my God,
Thou, THOU art enough for me.”

She kept full notes on her individual Bible study, and also upon the courses in which she followed lectures or printed outlines prepared by others. She was most keen about learning from any one who had studied in a different line or to greater depths than had she herself, and she took pains to preserve statistics, policies, data of any kind that would inform her. Whatever she gave out, however, had first been absorbed into her own life, and was an expression of truth as she knew and lived it. Again and again there would be two or three laboriously made outlines for an address which was to be given on some occasion considered very important by those who had the program in charge. She did not wait for “final inspiration.” She felt sure that God could inspire her as well in the days of preparation as in the hour of public delivery.

The space of two years was all that was given to the Southern Associations. In her report to the state committees in June, 1902, she said:

“The policy has been the same during the two years, namely, to strengthen and solidify the work already organized, rather than to go out into new fields. That policy has been carried out more in the second than in the first year.”

Still, when Frances Bridges began her work as secretary for the Carolinas, the Gulf States, and Tennessee and Kentucky, there were in affiliation with those committees sixty-eight student Associations, with twenty-six hundred members, and only one city Association—that in Nashville, Tennessee. When she gave up this position two years later, the membership had increased to thirty-four hundred. When she retired from her succeeding position, in 1905, the sixty-eight student Associations had grown to ninety-five, the one city Association had been augmented by nine others in cities and two in cotton-mill villages; while four traveling secretaries were occupied with the field that had been all hers at the beginning of her Association career.

After the Asheville Conference of 1902 Miss Bridges returned to her parents' home in Bridgeton, receiving, as she left the conference, a Bible in which these words are written:

“To so lead young women to Jesus Christ as their Lord and Master that they will surrender to Him their daily lives and share His passion for extending His Kingdom.”

This Bible, marked and lettered from cover to cover, is another record of the lessons she was daily learning with her Master.

IV

THE NATIONAL SECRETARY

IN the summer of 1902, when the resignation of Miss Effie Kelly Price, as senior student secretary for the American Committee of Young Women's Christian Associations, called for the reorganization of the student department, it was decided to assign each national secretary hereafter added to the staff to some one particular educational group. Money had already been promised for the support of the secretary among the denominational colleges, and to this field Miss Bridges was called at once, but it was not until after the opening of the new year that she was free to accept the invitation. Then the same necessity for her presence at home no longer existed, and in February, 1903, she arrived in Chicago. There was opportunity for acquaintance and consultation with committee members and secretaries at the time of the February meeting of the American Committee, also for an interview with the devoted Christian woman whom she represented upon the field, and whose life, as well as gifts, was consecrated to the extension of

Christ's Kingdom, and whose prayers accompanied Miss Bridges on every tour.

Since the Indiana State Committee had desired a month of evangelistic work in that territory, it had arranged an itinerary for Miss Bridges, including Butler University, Irvington; Franklin College, Franklin; DePauw University, Greencastle; the University of Indiana, Bloomington; and Earlham College, Richmond. The committee members met her at headquarters for conference; they spent an hour each day in intercession for her, and in every way aided the undertaking. Of the last visit of this series Miss Bridges wrote:

"In the case of all the non-Christians, who were led either by me or the Association workers to take some definite stand in their own hearts and publicly, it was the result of definite prayer on the part of some girl or teacher in the college. The prayer life of the Christians there was an inspiration and spiritual blessing to me."

Then followed a bit of pioneer work among a number of institutions in West Virginia, some of which had had few, if any, visits of this nature: A Normal School in Huntington, then the Lewisburg School at Ronceverte, Salem College, Broaddus College at Clarksburg, the West Virginia Conference Seminary at Buckhannon, Fairmount Normal School, West Liberty Normal School; then Bethany College, reached by a circuitous route of

thirty-four miles to go a distance of four; the University of West Virginia at Morgantown, a Normal School at Shepardstown, and finally Powhatan College at Charles Town. The trip up to Athens, a seat of learning three thousand feet above sea-level, would never be forgotten. The typical country "hack," carrying mail, trunks and passengers, took the whole day for the twenty-eight miles, resting at noon for dinner at a characteristic half-way house. The Green Brier River and the New River must be crossed: one by fording when the weather is favorable, although it is impassable after severe storms; the other by a trolley ferry propelled by a pole and guided by a chain sliding on a wire stretched from bank to bank. Then came the climb into the mountains, up which the roads are steep and rough, but where there are glorious views and stimulating air on a fine day. This made a severe schedule; but the heart of the secretary warmed as she saw the look on the face of the young president of one of these Associations, who said to her, in relation to her outside interests: "Miss Bridges, I have put this Association work first of all—before anything else." And, best of all, what she did has endured. In one school, where she organized twelve girls into an Association, and there seemed little to encourage, that small band has grown until the Association practically occupies the school, and has come to be one of the best Associations in the State. She copied

into her commonplace-book an inscription which attracted her attention over the door of the Old Stone Church, Lewisburg, West Virginia :

“This building was erected in the year 1796 at the expense of a few of the first inhabitants of this land, to commemorate their affection and esteem for the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Reader,

If you are inclined to applaud their virtues, give God the glory.”

The last of April was spent at the ninth biennial convention of the American Committee, which met at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. This was Miss Bridges' real introduction to the general field as national secretary. She speaks of it as a time of “inspiration, fellowship, and planning for the future that was surely needed,” and from which she went out “with clearer vision of immediate necessities and a deeper purpose to be used as God wills ; but, above all, with the invigorating strength that comes from fellowship with God and His workers.” All the secretaries met for several days of conference at the close of the public convention, and the traveling secretaries remained one additional day for still further conference. In these small gatherings could be seen, even so early in Miss Bridges' career, her willingness to listen to what more experienced workers had to say, her readiness to do any task, no matter

how simple or how tedious, that might be asked of her.

When Miss Bridges reached the Woman's College of Baltimore, for a four days' visit, she found that most careful preparation had been made for the meetings, so that her time could be almost immediately used in personal interviews, for which her soul longed. She valued good organization for what it made possible, because her time need not be spent then in preliminaries, but she could go directly to the real object for which she had come. Then followed a visit to the Woman's College of Frederick, Maryland, where all the students were waiting to form an Association. This town was Miss Bridges' ancestral home. Her mother's family, the Boyds and the Gists, were noted there for their patriotism and piety, even from Revolutionary times. Her great-grandfather, David Boyd, one of the earliest settlers of Frederick, was a genuine patriarch. His household of seven sons and three daughters and his negro slaves were daily called together for family prayers both morning and evening. He was ahead of most of his generation in the matter of total abstinence, and, instead of sending liquor to the men in the harvest field, according to the custom of the time, he furnished them non-alcoholic drinks. At the family altar it was his daily petition that one of his sons might be called to the ministry. He probably did not anticipate a time when women would

be called to a form of Christian ministry recognized as a true arm of the Church, or that one of his great-granddaughters would be teaching the Bible and speaking before religious gatherings within sound of the very bells which had called his family to Sabbath worship.

Then followed what was, each year the trip was made, one of the most congenial parts of the Association schedule, visits to a number of academies in the New England territory. Miss Bridges wrote, after a Sunday at Bradford Academy:

“It was a rare inspiration to be in a school of such grand old traditions as this one has, which at the same time is not only aiming to live up to them but striving to surpass them. I could not help wishing each girl might realize what I did as I looked up into the pictured faces of Harriet Newell and Ann Hazeltine Judson, and thought of their lives and others who have since followed them to the mission field.”

Visits to another group of preparatory schools were followed by a brief visit to Smith College, where her younger sister, Margaret, had that year entered as freshman.

In response to an invitation from the Waltham Association, Miss Bridges addressed their anniversary in the Baptist Church. She speaks modestly of the “evident interest” shown by the audience and the sum of money given for the local Association. It is extremely interesting to note the attitude Miss

Bridges always held to the city Associations whenever opportunity was given her to enter in any way into their work. At another time she mentioned her satisfaction in being able to see some of the large activities of the Pittsburgh Association, where her schedule in Pennsylvania allowed her a few days' stay for rest and observation. She accepted the invitation to speak at one of the noon meetings, and took as subject that day one that impressed itself upon her in reading Henry Drummond's "The Source of Power." Other city Associations where she delivered addresses were Germantown, Pennsylvania; Binghamton, New York; and Charlotte, North Carolina. When at West Liberty, West Virginia, a friend took her down to Wheeling to meet some ladies there who were wishing to form a city Young Women's Christian Association, which desire was later carried to fulfillment. Several of the women she met there refer to her as "that beautiful woman of deep spiritual power." One very happy Christmas was spent, as were other incidental days, at Association House in Chicago, a settlement which is the center of the social and religious life of hundreds of young women in the northwestern part of the city. One of her Smith classmates, a resident in a settlement in New York City, mentioned her acquaintance with some of her club members :

"The girls used to come up to my room in the evening to drink lemonade and eat cake. One of their chief de-

lights was to take the pictures of my college friends, choose the one that they liked the best, and then to ask me to tell them all about her. Two girls who worked in Hearn's were especially devoted to Frances' picture. They always called her 'Our friend.' When I heard she was coming I wrote at once to tell them, so that they might come to see her. However, they did not come, and I realized something must be the matter—so we went to Hearn's the next day to see what was the trouble. I wish you could have seen their faces when she came in, and Frances' face when they said: 'Well, she is just as pretty as her picture.' They had had to stay late the night before to take stock, and they were much disappointed. From that time on, Frances was more than ever 'Our friend,' and years afterward, when the girls were in trouble of any kind, they would write to ask me what 'Our friend' would like them to do. They have never forgotten her. Wherever I have been that picture has always been on my desk, and I kept it there because so many were helped by it. Frances had such a love for the girls in city life and she would so much have liked to be able to do more for them. I remember her sending me some money one day—just to make some one a little happier."

When Miss Bridges presented to an audience the whole Young Women's Christian Association Movement, she often used the title "An Old Gospel for a New Age," calling to mind how God had raised up different instrumentalities to carry a knowledge of Jesus Christ to people of this generation, who might not be touched by the methods of a generation or a century ago. Such an Association of young women was never a question of numbers; it was not a

general aggregate; it was the result of one, and another, and another individual soul; every young woman with her own life-problems, every young woman having something in common with the speaker, either her love of home, or her love of Christ, or her womanly undertaking of self-support, or the acknowledgment of all the bright things that have a place in the life of a young woman. She recognized that out from modern conditions affecting young women, arose certain tendencies: First, separation into smaller groups, with emphasis upon the individual; second, development of individual powers; third, marked and general desire to get away from the traditional in religion; fourth, but no corresponding increase of judgment and decision in putting first things first; fifth, a strong and earnest desire to serve. These need the gospel of the grace and power of God revealed in Christ, the gospel of prayer as a working force, the gospel of a true perspective, the gospel of the joy of doing His will, of seeing and having things in right relations. She traced the spread of the Association movement from 1855, when Miss Robarts formed the Prayer Union and Lady Kinnaird maintained the first boarding-home in London, down to the present world-wide status and membership of hundreds of thousands:

“But the largest achievement has not been in numbers but in the application of the old gospel, the gospel of the

Good Samaritan, as seen in the Travelers' Aid work, the gospel of freedom in making possible the all-round development of young women, the gospel of the power of Christ over sin, and the gospel of the power of prayer available in every life."

For a few days before the opening of the student conference at Silver Bay, Miss Bridges worked with the other conference leaders and business managers in making the final arrangements and assignments for the conference. The thought of "putting people where they will be most happy, for the honor and glory of God," made even these tedious details a pleasure.

When the conference began, Miss Bridges had charge of the preparatory school section. It was the first time this had been introduced into a large student conference, and upon four days this little group came together, about thirty girls with three or four teachers. So satisfactory was this plan that Miss Bridges had the same work in charge in 1904 and 1905 with still greater success. Her own experience in boarding-school as pupil and teacher made her able to understand the boarding-school girls and to advise concerning their forms of Christian work better than one who knew only the large woman's college, or co-educational university. The leaflet she prepared on "Religious Meetings in Secondary Schools" revealed this knowledge, especially the

paragraph on the "Purpose," and the appendix giving suggestions for meeting topics:

"The prayer-meeting in a secondary school, as in fact that in any other institution, should be the sincere expression of the religious life of that school. Meetings and Associations have lost their hold because of the effort to express something which was not felt. This is particularly a necessary precaution in the secondary schools. For this reason it will be found helpful to have a majority of the subjects for these meetings based on some Bible study that is being done. But the religious meeting should not exist merely to express the religious life as it is. The claim for its being is to make that life deeper and more real. Surely the purpose of the Christian Association, to help young women into a fuller knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, should find here one of its greatest means. What a difference in the life of a school and of an Association if this purpose should be back of all committee and individual preparation for each meeting!"

"How shall we do when in Rome? (Away from home Christians.) 2 Corinthians 5:9, with 2 Timothy 2:1-7.

"A daily necessity. Bible study rally. Deuteronomy 6:4-9; John 5:39-40 (R.V.).

"One day in the life of Christ. What it meant to the world. (The Sermon on the Mount.)

"A woman of high rank: Pandita Ramabai. See 'The Life of Pandita Ramabai,' by Helen S. Dyer.

"What some poets have taught us of God. Psalms 26, 46 and 91 of His loving care. Psalm 51 of His mercy and our need of cleansing. Psalm 93 of His majesty and power. ('God's in His heaven and all's right with the world.')

"What does it mean to be a Christian? (a) In the school-room. (b) On the street. (c) At a social occasion. (d) At home.

"Putting the ball in. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

"'For your sakes.' References to 'for your sakes.'

"Addition, not subtraction. (A Christian's Life.) Matthew 6:33. See address 'First' in Drummond's 'Greatest Thing in the World.'

"'John the Baptist, one of the world's seven greatest men.'

"What some artists have taught us of the life of Christ. Make use of Perry or Brown pictures. (1) 'The Arrival of the Shepherds.' (2) 'The Holy Family.' (3) 'The Child in the Temple.' (4) 'Christ and the Fisherman.' (5) 'The Good Shepherd.'"

She was also chairman of the committee on delegation meetings which suggested uniform topics for the good-night meetings, and each day brought together all the group leaders for prayer and conference, emphasizing the value of conducting these little family meetings without outside speakers, in order to give the delegates a chance for personal participation.

Her first vacation as national secretary was spent, like almost every other vacation, quietly with her own family and friends. Mr. Bridges had come, in 1903, as pastor of the Presbyterian Church, to the beautiful little town of Conklin, New York, among the hills overlooking the Susquehanna River. In this atmosphere of quiet and rest and fellowship she was strengthened for the year ahead.

After vacation, came the Geneva conference. This is the historic summer conference of the Young Women's Christian Association movement, for the first conference held in Bay View, Michigan, in 1901, was moved next year to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, on the grounds at the west end of the lake, owned by the Western Secretarial Institute of the Young Men's Christian Association, and here it has continued without interruption. On first arrival at the conference site, the visitor is sometimes disappointed to find only a little village of tents, with more substantial buildings, of course, for auditorium, dining-hall, and other purposes; but when she faces about and looks down the incline at the limpid expanse of water, looks between the overhanging branches of the oak-trees upon the shining lake flecked by a passing breeze, she anticipates with regret each twilight and each dawn, because she knows that so much sooner will come the time when she must leave the spot which grows more dear and more beautiful to her with each hour.

The tents occupied by the leaders of the conference stand close by the edge of the lake. Here, in the afternoon hours, come young women to ask the speakers and secretaries about the higher things and the personal things of life. They have come to the conference, perhaps, not so much for the addresses or for the formal Bible classes as to find some answer to questions they have been unable to answer

for themselves. As one girl wrote Miss Bridges after a similar conference: "You did not tell me, 'God says you must do this or you must do that.' You just told me about Jesus Christ, and let me find out for myself what He wanted me to do."

When the lights are out all over the camp, and there is no stir except the movement of the trees, there may be heard from all the lower row of tents the ceaseless lapping of the water upon the quiet shore. Sunlight brings another day, filled with appointments and responsibilities, but Frances Bridges never left her tent to meet these responsibilities, even in the busiest conference season, without having taken a quiet hour to find out what was God's will concerning her that day. She was not thinking of others now, nor preparing for public duties; she was entering into the life of Jesus Christ, her Redeemer, in order that she might present Him faithfully to those who should appeal to her that day.

One interesting experience is referred to by Miss Bridges in the following words:

"The day which intervened between the student conference and the secretarial training conference was spent very unexpectedly in Chicago, at the home of Mrs. Cyrus McCormick, when I was one of a party of ten who had been invited to tell Madame McCormick of our student conference at Lake Geneva. Her evident personal interest in us and in the work of the student conference, and particularly in the work in factories, is very touching."

It was the custom of the traveling secretaries of The American Committee to hold, at the beginning of each quarter, a prayer service, at which requests for prayer were noted, and the answers to prayers made at previous times carefully recorded. Topics of every nature were brought up at these meetings :

“That the work in pioneer states may be so developed that as rapidly as possible state secretaries may be called.”

“That the finances for the student department may be early secured.”

“That the summer conferences shall work out for general satisfaction.”

“That the right secretaries for newly organized places may be secured.”

“For a worker to look after the interests of religious work in city Associations,” etc., etc.

Miss Bridges was a great accession to this prayer circle, because of her simple and unlimited faith. As one looks back over the petitions introduced into these prayer groups, and realizes how, before the next quarterly meeting, or before a calendar year had gone by, many of them were answered, and that in later years nearly all of them came to fulfillment, one appreciates better than ever a faith that is measured more by love for God than by claiming immediate results.

In The American Committee meetings Miss Bridges never took an active part. When asked, she would express her opinions quietly, and if it

were a matter of conviction, with decision; but she felt that she was rather one to carry out the wishes of the Committee with all loyalty than by her advice to help form its policy. In the student department meetings, however, she felt greater responsibility.

Then followed the first tour of fall conventions, beginning with the Wisconsin convention at Beaver Dam, where she gave two formal addresses, besides helping in the various conferences and general meetings. In her address on "The Friendship of Jesus Christ," Miss Bridges said:

"What makes life worth living is friendship with Jesus Christ. Christ brings joy into our lives and makes out of us what our best nature wants us to be. We cannot be friends with anyone without imbibing something of her grace. This friendship with Jesus Christ makes our life count for something, and, as a result, we can say, with Paul: 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' You want joy, peace, and rest, but there is a difference between wanting a thing and willing a thing. Friendship with Him means telling Him to put out of our lives that which does not belong there. The basis of true friendship is a basis of mutual worth. When God opens your eyes to see yourself, you see that you are not worthy of His friendship.

"Herein is love: that God loves us and gave His only begotten Son for the propitiation for our sins. In offering friendship to us, Jesus Christ took into consideration that pride, namely, that we do not want a friend whom we are not worthy of. So, on a basis of mutual worth, those who accept Jesus Christ as a Savior can accept

Him as a friend. When Jesus Christ points His finger to some sin, unforgiven, to some part of our nature, some part of our social life that we are not ready to yield to Him, it is then that He calls to us to let Him take that sin out of our lives and put in His righteousness. Then we have a start for our friendship with Jesus Christ. Keep your hearts open, and let Jesus Christ talk to you; let Him speak earnestly to those willing—tenderly to those who are lame. The reason we do not have this perfect friendship is because we put men in the place of Jesus Christ. We give to some worldly friend the love and allegiance we should give to Jesus Christ. Some of us stop at the starting-point of friendship, because we think that the life of Jesus Christ does not have the same laws applied to it as are applied to the physical life.”

Several years after, the chairman of the state committee said of this address :

“The vision that she gave remained clear throughout the days we were together there, and, I doubt not, in many hearts ever since, as it has in mine. She stood before us, so simple and fair, yet self was completely effaced as she held up Jesus Christ and all He might mean in the life of a young woman.”

The Illinois convention met at Galesburg, and here she spoke on the topic “A Life with a Purpose,” taking as her Scripture basis the words since adopted as the national motto, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” She said :

"A lost world is something very dreadful in the sight of Christ, for He gave His own life, without which there can be no life. The moment we are born we begin to die. We are sowing the things we are going to reap. The end of deceit, cowardice, selfishness, is death.

"Receiving of life means turning away from the selfish things and taking in Christ only. In addition to repentance, there is also the taking of Jesus into the life. There are those who are not taking Him into their lives.

"My peace I leave with you. Do we lose our temper as we did before we were His children? Do we criticise those who do not do as we would have them do? Then do we sit down thoughtfully and wonder and ask Him why it is? Do we have power that He would have us have? Why? He has promised it and expects us to have it. It means we are going to act and talk so that others will know we are His children.

"Each one stands in one of three places:

"1. Those who do not know Jesus Christ at all (yes or no).

"2. Those who are Christians within them, but do not know the abundance of life (yes or no).

"3. Those who are obedient to the call to the highest."

At the Indiana convention at Richmond she spoke on "Expectation" and on "How to Know the Will of God," and at the Iowa convention at Ottumwa she assisted in the student conference, and on other occasions. At several of these conventions it was her joy to lead the Sunday afternoon gospel service, and in following years reference was made to young women who first found Christ as their Savior, or who experienced the absolute restfulness of complete

surrender to God's will, because of what the speaker had represented Jesus Christ to be in these Sunday afternoon services.

There was some incidental college visiting during this fall, and then several weeks of work under the supervision of the State Committee of Colorado and Wyoming. Miss Bridges was intensely interested in this. She writes of that tour:

"This Colorado field is small and far removed from the center of our work, but it is without a doubt strategic. The Associations already in the field are showing what can be done. I feel I can hardly speak too strong a word for what this state committee is accomplishing."

It is curious that, although this was her first visit to the Rocky Mountain country, and in her stay at Colorado College her horizon was dominated by the snowy crest of Pike's Peak, no mention of the scenery finds its way into her reports. She was absorbed in the real purpose of her tour, strengthening the existing work and helping the students at the State Normal School at Greeley to form a well-grounded, aggressive organization.

The winter of 1904 opened with visits to three colleges in Oxford, Ohio: the Western College for Women, Miami University, and Oxford College; then a visit to a group of schools in Rhode Island, and attendance upon the New England convention held that year at Holyoke. Here Miss Bridges had

charge of the preparatory school section and spoke on "The College Girl in City Work." A short trip to Northampton gave her an opportunity to speak before the Association of her *alma mater*, in a life-work meeting, on "The College Graduate in the Christian Association Movement."

Through the generosity of a member of The American Committee, a scholarship at the Bible Teachers' Training School in New York City allowed different secretaries in turn to have a month of Bible study under various instructors there. Miss Bridges writes:

"The time has gone by only too quickly in the blessed joy of taking in. We secretaries very soon get to the place of a sponge wrung dry, and so the privilege of this month is very blessed, drinking in some of God's wonderful truths, that we may the more practically and helpfully give them out. The work which is to follow can tell better than any words now the advantage this month of study and of thought has been to me. From this study I have the material and inspiration for many more months of individual study."

And, shortly after, she added:

"I am already realizing the gain in the visits I have made since that time."

In the middle of March, Miss Bridges began a visitation of Presbyterian colleges, under the auspices of the Board of Aid for Colleges and the Evan-

gelistic Committee of the Presbyterian Church. Associated with her was Miss Elizabeth Cole, state secretary for Illinois, whose territory included the colleges of the West as far as the Pacific Coast. Miss Bridges visited seventeen colleges in the East and Middle West. At seven of these institutions, union conferences for both young men and young women were held, because to these institutions, for various reasons, the young men who were visiting the men students of the Presbyterian colleges were not able to go. The purpose of these visits was to arouse the Christian students to the preparation for and accomplishment of individual personal work. The personal workers' classes, already organized in many Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, had made the students intelligent and earnest in their eagerness to find the most helpful ways of bringing others to know Christ. Her field in these colleges represented about twenty-two hundred students, of whom seventy-five per cent. were Christians. A large number of signed agreements to become personal workers were sent in. In some institutions the proportion was as high as one out of three of the Christian students, and in others not more than one in eleven. Miss Bridges reported to the committee:

"The colleges are standing, as Mr. Mabie said of a college in the South, with their faces toward the future. You will find the most of them marked by high ideals in schol-

arship and in culture, and they are making character out of some of the finest and truest material we have in our grand old church. A strong loyalty to the church and her interests in the home and foreign mission fields is being developed. There is a fire for missions in some, and here, too, I found loyalty to the Bible as God's Word, and to the deity of Jesus Christ, as the great rock foundation stone."

A visit to a number of New England colleges and academies preceded the Silver Bay Student Conference. This conference commenced, Miss Bridges felt, where the last year's conference left off, especially in respect to the help the girls in the secondary school section received, even from the beginning of the gathering.

After a vacation month in Conklin, there came attendance upon the Geneva Conferences, speaking on student work in the city conference, helping in the conduct of the general secretaries' training conference, as previously at Silver Bay, and then the regular sessions of the student conference, at which Miss Bridges had charge of the missionary department. This was the first year that mission study classes were held in the Geneva Conference, and the two hundred and sixty-three members in the three classes sustained an interest very delightful to the heart of the leader. Miss Bridges was also particularly gratified that ten different missionary boards were represented by board members or missionary guests, and that, in the denominational missionary

meetings, the young women of these particular churches had a chance to learn of home and foreign missions, as carried on by their own denominations. Some of these board representatives were greatly cheered to be able to recruit workers there in the conference. In this session, as in all previous ones, her formal meetings and public addresses were simply the opportunity by which Miss Bridges could come into relation with individual girls. With these there might follow long hours of personal conversation which often resulted in extended correspondence in future years, and in which the secretary was able to advise not only for an individual life, but perhaps for all the Christian forces of young women in a college or university.

There was very little local visitation during the fall of 1904. Most of the time was given to attendance upon state conventions and upon a congress arranged by friends of The American Committee at the time of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis.

At one of the sessions of the Gulf States convention, the theme was: "The Purpose of a Young Women's Christian Association." Miss Stafford, the state student secretary, spoke upon the first purpose, "To win young women to Christ"; Miss Bridges upon the second, "To build them up in Christ"; and Miss Hays, of the city department of The American Committee, on the third point, "To



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send them out for Christ." One who was there wrote:

"I remember the strong and deeply spiritual address Miss Bridges gave and the rapt attention of the girls, for she had the power of attracting them in a wonderful way. Her own personality at once gained their attention and interest, and then her intense earnestness and deep consecration to the Master impressed them as few young women could. She lived what she taught, and her influence still remains in its uplifting power in the hearts of many of the young women of the South."

This convention was followed by the Tennessee and Kentucky convention at Lexington, the Virginias convention at Charles Town, West Virginia, and the Carolinas convention at Charlotte. It was a very happy season, for she met again friends grown dear through their co-operation three and four years before, when these states formed her regular field, and she thanked God and took courage when she saw the increasing influence of this Christian movement among the student communities. She spent her Christmas this year at Conklin with her family. Some one sent her these verses, of which she was very fond:

"How did they keep His birthday then,
The little fair Christ, so long ago?
Oh, many there were to be housed and fed,
And there was no place in the inn, they said;
So into the manger the Christ must go,
To lodge with the cattle and not with men.

“The ox and the ass they munched their hay,
 They munched and they slumbered, wondering not;
 And out in the midnight, cold and blue,
 The shepherds slept, and the sheep slept, too,
 Till the angels’ song, and the bright star ray,
 Guided the wise men to the spot.

“But only the wise men knelt and praised,
 And only the shepherds came to see,
 And the rest of the world cared not at all
 For the little Christ in the oxen’s stall;
 And we are angry and amazed
 That such a dull, hard thing should be.

“How do we keep His birthday now?
 We ring the bells, and we raise the strain;
 We hang up garlands everywhere,
 And bid the tapers twinkle fair,
 And feast and frolic, and then we go
 Each to the same old lives again.

“Are we so much better, then, than they
 Who failed the new-born Christ to see?
 To them a helpless babe: to us
 He shines a Savior glorious,
 Our Lord, our Friend, our All—yet we
 Are half-asleep this Christmas day.”

It had been seen at the Geneva Conference of 1904 that the delegations overcrowded the capacity of the camp, and a decision was made to divide it for 1905. Students from the eastern territory were arranged for at Lakeside, Ohio, and from the western territory at Waterloo, Iowa. As Miss Bridges

was to be one of the leaders of the Lakeside Conference, her winter and spring visits were chiefly in the denominational colleges in the surrounding region—Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, and elsewhere. This thorough preliminary acquaintance made the conference a greater power than it could otherwise possibly have been; for, in spite of embarrassments in the accommodations, the spirit proved as true and strong as if there had been no possible contrary currents.

The Woman's College of Baltimore, an Association in which she was most deeply interested and where she was peculiarly welcome, found a place in her winter program, as did several other colleges and preparatory schools in the Pennsylvania territory. She spoke of the Association in Wilson College, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, as a beautiful illustration of the intercollegiate bond in our Association work:

“Last year there was practically no one there who knew the broad aspects of Association work, for the Association is only two years old. This year a young woman from Pomona College, a representative girl at Capitola, and a young faculty member who knew the Association at Mt. Holyoke, and another student who knew the missionary side through the Student Volunteer Movement, have been leading spirits in the work. Through a deeper prayer-life in the Association, through practical work in a boys' club outside, and through well-developed committee work, there is great promise for the future.”

In writing of the visits of this season, Miss Bridges adds :

“In one college, by far the best visit in point of interest at the time and lasting results of any I have made, these conditions were brought about through the careful preparation of the Christian students. There were forty girls in the volunteer prayer circles. The deep interest of the cabinet was the means that God used to pour out upon the whole college the presence of His spirit. Faculty and students alike recognized this presence and spoke of it. Although the girls were very earnest, and many of them profoundly stirred, I was impressed again and again with the wholesomeness, which evinced the real presence of God. On the last Thursday in chapel, at the suggestion of the cabinet, the president called a meeting for prayer for fifteen minutes at noon. To me the most beautiful and wonderful part of the visit was that it was very evidently not the work of any one person. An unusual number of Christian girls of the college were actively and quietly working to win others, and the work is still being kept up.”

And of another :

“I realize how little I have been responsible for this work. The answer came in each place because of the need, and because there was in each case some one who saw this need clearly enough for the answer. In this past month I have many times been made glad at the work of God’s hands. I thank The American Committee again deeply for this opportunity of serving.”

Once, when she had been spending a couple of days with a summer conference friend at a woman’s

college, she thus expressed herself to a Smith classmate:

"It was so good to be in touch with a college so much like Smith. They go ahead of us in buildings, and they surely have a fine set of undergraduates, but I'll still stick by the dear old white. Somehow, seeing other colleges and their good points only makes you more loyal to your own."

At the beginning of the spring term, Miss Bridges was in residence for a short time at the Secretaries' Training Institute in Chicago. This Institute had been opened in January, 1904, as a permanent training school for secretaries, and, in addition to the resident secretary and the outside Bible teachers and other lecturers, there was usually present one national secretary, speaking on topics belonging to her department and assisting in general ways. As the secretary of the training department was absent at the Capitola Conference, Miss Bridges was asked to act as head of the Institute during her stay. She said, afterward:

"To my surprise and real dread, I was asked to take this responsibility. I speak of my 'dread' because it was changed into such genuine joy and thanksgiving to God for the wisdom and strength He gave for this emergency. There were some slight changes to be made in the schedule, as outlined, but these were easily arranged through the advice of the chairman of the Institute committee."

Miss Bridges was always very loyal to any effort to bring into Association work and prepare for

larger service young women from the various colleges which she visited; and there are secretaries in student and city Associations who realize that their attention might never have been called to any Christian service, had it not been that she personally, or in a public gathering, laid before them the opportunities in the life of a secretary in a Young Women's Christian Association. Her own joy in her work, always sincere and evident, was the best argument she could have used to any one hesitating to make a decision. She gained confidence to advise from her intense faith in other people and her assurance that they would rise to the highest of which they were capable, and, one might add, from her own experimental belief that God would never fail those whom He had ordained for any post. However, she was most faithful in leading a young woman to discern if she were not fitted for this calling. Extracts from two letters show this very plainly:

"It seems best to advise you not to enter the work. We believe that you are not strong enough physically, and too nervous, and that you would not do your best work in the Association secretaryship. I believe truly God's will for you is that you should stay at home and live His message as you go about each day. And (may I speak very frankly?) I believe you need to place the emphasis just now on living Christ without *any* organized agency, with the prayer in your heart that God, through your simple daily living, will draw some one else, and then another, to Himself, and perhaps without your knowledge."

And in the same spirit :

“As I remember you at college (and you will forgive me if it is not a fair estimate of the present), you have the energy and initiative that are so necessary in that work. But you were not always patient with others, nor did you then lead *different* classes of girls. You seemed to be a leader of a certain group. You never signed the card for personal work, and, as I remember, the reason was not your objection to signing the card but to doing the work. To bring others to Christ must be the largest part, the main purpose, in fact, of a secretary's life. Begin to study Christ's life as a personal worker and you can begin to know whether you would ever fit into the secretaryship.”

This Institute experience was almost immediately followed by attendance at the tenth biennial convention of The American Committee, held in Detroit, the last general convention of The American Committee. This was a time of gratification to all friends of the movement. Four hundred and sixty-six delegates from twenty-nine states, from Canada and from England, united in a five days' session in this model Association building, and could hardly credit to what proportions this movement had grown. It was a jubilee meeting. Fifty years before, the first Young Women's Christian Association had been organized in England, and the representative of the World's Committee, Mrs. E. W. Moore, in giving a retrospect of thanksgiving for what had been accomplished, prophesied a splendid outcome of the

work being done in the United States. Miss Bridges helped in the various program sessions and conferences, both in the convention and the secretaries' conferences following.

After visitation in New England, Miss Bridges went to the Asheville Conference, held this year at Kenilworth Inn at Biltmore. She had not been at the Southern Conference since she had resigned from the position of state secretary for the three committees—nearly a student generation before. Girls whom she had seen as they joined the Association in their freshman year had grown in spiritual life and executive efficiency; older students came back as teachers, while state committee members reported extension of the movement into points which a few years ago had seemed permanently indifferent. It showed in many ways that the Young Women's Christian Association had "come into the Kingdom for such a time as this." Southern girls were offering themselves for training as secretaries, many were returning home to start religious or industrial movements among the young women in their own neighborhoods. There were present in the conference earnest Christian girls, members of the cabinets of the South Carolina mill village Associations. There was growing up one sisterhood, and that included personal relation to her own Elder Brother, Jesus Christ.

The same spirit of joy pervaded the Silver Bay

Student Conference that succeeded. The following prayer, by George Matheson, which was quoted at that conference, she treasured from that time on :

“My heart needs Thee, O Lord, my heart needs Thee ! No part of my being needs Thee like my heart. All else within me can be filled by Thy gifts. My hunger can be satisfied by daily bread. My thirst can be allayed by earthly waters. My cold can be removed by household fires. My weariness can be relieved by outward rest. But no outward thing can make my heart pure. The calmest day will not calm my passions. The fairest scene will not beautify my soul. The richest music will not make harmony within. The breezes can cleanse the air ; but no breeze can cleanse a spirit. This world has not provided for my heart. It has provided for my eye ; it has provided for my ear ; it has provided for my touch ; it has provided for my taste ; it has provided for my sense of beauty—but it has not provided for my heart. Provide Thou for my heart, O Lord ! It is the only unwinged bird in all creation : give it wings, O Lord ! Earth has failed to give it wings ; its very power of loving has often dragged it in the mire. Be Thou the strength of my heart ! Be Thou its fortress in temptation, its shield in remorse, its covert in the storm, its star in the night, its voice in the solitude ! Guide it in its gloom ; help it in its heat ; direct it in its doubt ; calm it in its conflict ; fan it in its faintness ; prompt it in its perplexity ; lead it through its labyrinths ; raise it from its ruins ! I cannot rule this heart of mine ; keep it under the shadow of Thine own wings !”

Then came vacation at her own home and attendance at the Lakeside Conference. It seemed as if

Miss Bridges had entered upon a stronger and mightier work than she had ever before accomplished. She felt this in her own heart, and others noticed it.

At the opening of the Secretaries' Training Institute, she spoke on the words, "And after the fire a still small Voice." It was an appeal for the control of the Spirit in all the details of daily living, listening to God's voice within, and yielding prompt obedience to His suggestions. In this talk she revealed some of her own habits of prayer in relation to the ordinary affairs of life that made a profound impression upon the young women who expected, like her, to give themselves—all they had, all they were, and all they might be—for the service of Christ, whom they loved. The fact that her resignation was in the hands of The American Committee, and that she knew these visits were to be the last in this particular capacity, probably helped in producing the impression made this fall. It is said that she spoke like one whose lips had been touched with a live coal from off God's altar. This testimony came from her public addresses, especially from the vesper services that she led.

Besides assisting in other ways at the Illinois convention, she conducted the Bible hours, speaking of God's great gifts to man—His Son, and His Word—explaining through the ceremonies of the tabernacle worship the steps of sacrifice, cleansing,

and prayer, in our own approach to God, through Christ. During the student conference in the Minnesota convention she said :

“This is not my work, and it is not your work, but it is God’s work. We may be bearing responsibility that does not belong to us, but to God. ‘In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.’ Let us find out from God just what our problem is. Let us meet it, first of all, with the consciousness that God is going to solve it. It may not be this year. We will not go ahead and plan this work—if it is His work—without first honestly asking His direction. If God is at the head, then the honor does not belong to us.”

Her last appointment as secretary was attendance upon the Michigan convention held at Lansing. The entertaining Association, that of the Michigan Agricultural College, gave a supper to the delegates on Saturday evening. This was her birthday, and the occasion was arranged as a birthday party for her. All the college delegates marched in, passing her, and singing a song composed for the occasion. A cake with candles was brought on in state and placed before her. A picture that will always remain in the minds of the persons present is Miss Bridges as she sat holding her birthday cake, with the light of the candles shining up in her face, making a little speech to the girls grouped around her. As she thanked them at the close, she said :

"I hope you will all be just as happy as I am going to be." One writes :

"She was dear that night, and I always shall remember how she looked. She really did not appear a great deal upon the program, but I don't know of any secretary whose presence was more felt at such times."

It was appropriate to her own views of life that the memory people had of her in the last convention she attended in an official capacity should not have been official, in the sense of calling for the performance of public duties, but just a memory of the social hour that was appropriate to any young woman saying good-bye to one epoch of her life and preparing to enter another.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MONROE, N. C.

V

THE PASTOR'S WIFE

NO general principle was more frequently emphasized in Miss Bridges' teaching than that God's eternal purposes were to be attained if each Christian fulfilled the minute portion of duty assigned to him. That duty might be working or waiting. One might sow and another reap. Happy surprises, or severe discipline, might be involved; but if each person were faithful, all else was immaterial—the place, or nature, or reward of service itself. The achievement of God's ultimate purpose was the glory of the whole.

God had now changed her plans, and she laid down her work as secretary with two convictions of mind. One, that divine guidance would supply any need caused by her retirement; the second, that her interest in the Young Women's Christian Association, which had meant more and more to her during the past five years, would continue to deepen, though this official connection were severed. Although deeply interested in the plans by which the work of The American Committee was merged into that of

the National Board she never saw their consummation.

In the summer of 1905 announcement was made of the engagement of Miss Bridges to the Rev. George Hannah Atkinson, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Monroe, North Carolina. Mr. Atkinson, also, was born in a Presbyterian manse. His father, the Rev. W. R. Atkinson, D.D., was at that time pastor of the church at Charlotte Court House, Virginia, and later president of the Charlotte Female Institute—now the Presbyterian College of Charlotte—North Carolina, and of the College for Women in Columbia, South Carolina. Mr. George Atkinson was educated at the South Carolina Military Academy of Charleston, and also at the South Carolina College, Columbia. After completing a three years' course in McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, in 1899, he entered his first pastorate over the Trout Run and Bodine churches in Northumberland Presbytery, in the Synod of Pennsylvania. Two years afterward he was called to the First Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, North Carolina, as co-pastor with the Rev. J. R. Howerton, D.D. Here his special charge was the great missionary work of this church. In April, 1903, he accepted the call of the Presbyterian Church of Monroe, Union County, North Carolina—twenty-four miles from Charlotte. Mr. Atkinson's thorough interest in foreign missions led him to attend the fourth international conven-

tion of the Student Volunteer Movement at Toronto in February, 1902. While the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor, at the China Inland Mission Home, in Toronto, he met Miss Bridges, who was already known to members of his own family, and with whom he shared the acquaintance of many mutual friends. Their tastes and their views of life were very similar. That God should give this crowning joy to them did not seem strange, for they knew His love, and how He worked out perfect plans for those who trusted in Him.

There was, throughout the months of her engagement, the development of a spirit of joyousness that was new to many of her friends. Miss Bridges' sense of humor was never keen; it may be because humorous expressions often involve an extravagance of language alien to one very nice in her regard for the truth, or because sometimes humor involves laughter at people or at situations which conflicted with her sense of courtesy. Happy and contented she always was, and she always entered into the happiness of other people. Now, in her own felicity, the congratulations of friends were uncounted. Many little social functions and informal gatherings were arranged in her honor, and at them she appeared like a new being. Her life was being rounded out, and the prospect of a settled manner of living, with home and local church duties, appealed to her as something instinctively attractive.

The wedding occurred in her father's church at Conklin, New York, Wednesday, December twenty-seventh, 1905, at four in the afternoon. Christmas greens decorated the building, which was filled with a company of her friends, many of whom had come a long distance to see the beautiful bride in this hour. The service included the reading of John's account of the marriage at Cana in Galilee, and was in every way adapted to this union of two disciples of Jesus Christ. She was fond of Conklin, and enjoyed it during her vacations. Her letters from there contained many references to the beauty of the hills, with their changing lights, and to the wide sweep of the river. Once, in February, she wrote:

"I was home last week for two beautiful days. Father and I walked one night to a cottage prayer-meeting a mile from home. It was over the flats where the wind blew cold, and the snow was in drifts, but it was worth the effort."

On the last Sunday of her life as Frances Bridges, her last Sunday in the old home, the communion of our Lord's Supper was celebrated at the morning service, with her father and Mr. Atkinson as officiating clergymen.

The few days of travel after the wedding included a visit to Baltimore, where they met their many friends and relatives at a reception given for them, and in the first week of January she entered

her new home in Monroe with great anticipation of what this life was to mean. The South was always dear to her. One of her college classmates at Smith had given her a name in her sophomore year, "my Southern girl," because, as her friend said: "Although she did not come from a Southern state, yet she united in her personality those characteristics which were associated ideally in my mind with the Southern girl. The beauty of her character, the graciousness and sweetness of her manner, the loveliness of her face and form, spelled a charm, the quality that calls forth the chivalrous in both man and woman. It was not strange that when her work drew her to the South it was as if she had always lived there. In 1901, after her first year's work among Southern girls, she wrote: 'I like the South as much as I always thought I would, and am glad to be called one of its daughters, even by adoption.' Hence, at the time of her marriage, she went unto her own and became in very truth a daughter of the South."

Sometimes Mrs. Atkinson had feared that because there had been so little sorrow or disappointment in her life she would not be able to understand the suffering of other people, but she said after her marriage:

"God's hand has been in this. My cup of joy is just full to running over. I think that God wants me to give to others just from the very joy of my life. I used to wish

for suffering, that I might mean more to other people, but I believe that God intends me to give my very joy."

When she went to Monroe she affirmed: "This is my town, these are my people," and she entered at once into its many manifestations, only fearing that her keen delight in her housekeeping and home-making might blind her to some of the calls for service outside its four walls. She had possibly feared a little for the ease with which she would master the housekeeper's arts, for she repeatedly acknowledged to her friends during those brief, happy months: "Housekeeping is great fun, and goes along of itself much better than I anticipated; I really dreaded it, but if you knew Mr. Atkinson and could see my convenient little home, you would not wonder that it is easy and delightful."

Her home, like every other part of her life, belonged to God—"one of His houses." She loved the winter days there, with the rain frozen on the trees. She loved the spring days there, when the woods stood adorned with the rich, rare beauty of the dogwood blossoms. One of the first steps she took in settling the new manse was to fasten upon the wall of the dining-room the illuminated text:

"CHRIST, THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE.

"The Head of this House is Christ our Lord,
At every meal the welcome Guest,
The Silent Listener to every word,
The constant though unseen Watcher of all our actions."

One of two college girls who were her guests in Monroe said it would have been a revelation to the young women who knew Miss Bridges only as their student secretary to see Mrs. Atkinson going about the house, doing the little things that are dear to a woman's heart. A tack-hammer and a paper of tacks gave her, she said, almost as much pleasure as some of her cut-glass. One day, as she was dusting the library table, she remarked, with a smile:

"Doesn't this table look fine? I do like to polish, for you can see the results so quickly, much more than in some other lines of work." Over her desk she hung the picture of Whistler's mother. She said it brought to her a sense of rest and quiet when her work was finished.

Her hospitality was one of her most characteristic features. Visiting clergymen, members of the congregation, and outside people to whom no other door was open, were graciously welcomed, because of the love and true hospitality in her heart. She used to plan to have in some of the children of the Sunday-school, or of her friends, when something was going on that would specially interest them. For instance, she telephoned for one little girl to come over the day she unpacked the dishes forwarded from Conklin, because she knew that her own child's tea-set was in the barrel, and realized the delight it would bring to her little visitor to see this. One of the

young guests said, after she had been taken away from them :

“It is so lonely here in Monroe without Mrs. Atkinson. She made us all so happy. I hope I may grow into the woman she wanted me to be.”

The domestic staff included a little twelve-year-old colored boy, whose labors showed devotion, even if some other elements of usefulness were lacking. Mrs. Atkinson taught the child every day a portion of the Lord’s Prayer, so that he might have a part in family prayers. One day a guest, in leaving the house, said to him : “Willie, don’t you want to come up home with me?” He seemed interested in the invitation at first, but soon said : “I don’t know ’bout goin’ with you all. Laws, you see, if she that does the cookin’ should leave, I’d have to be here to do the cookin’ for Miss Frances. I couldn’t leave her alone.”

She always tried to give a bit of herself to her guests, whether a chance caller or a friend staying under her roof. One night, companionably sitting by the fire, she picked up a copy of Ugo Bassi’s “The Sermon in the Hospital” and read it through aloud, commenting on her favorite portions. These were the lines :

“Measure thy life by loss instead of gain,
Not by the wine drunk, but the wine poured forth,
For love’s strength standeth in love’s sacrifice,
And whoso suffers most hath most to give.”

* * * * *

“But in obedience and humility;
Waiting on God’s hand, not forestalling it.
Seek not to snatch presumptuously the palm
By self-election; poison not thy wine
With bitter herbs, if He has made it sweet;
Nor rob God’s treasures because the key
Is easy to be turned by mortal hands.
The gifts of birth, death, genius, suffering,
Are all for His hand only to bestow.”

The Sunday-school claimed her attention, with a class of fifteen young women, and even during her brief residence, from January to June, she had the satisfaction of seeing one of these young women publicly confess Christ and unite with the church. The girls’ club, The Miriams, and the boys’ club, The Covenanters, were other centers of interest. When any of her plans for children’s work did not carry as she had expected, she took the disappointment as a bit of discipline. She said she had often prayed for humility and patience, and these were some of the ways in which God was giving her the answer to her prayer. She was president of the Ladies’ Foreign Missionary Society, as well as deeply interested in the work of the Home Missionary Society and the Ladies’ Aid Society of the church.

Each Wednesday a little prayer group met at the “manse” to pray over the interests of Christ’s kingdom, and before the meetings in March, conducted by the Rev. Alfred H. Moment, D.D., of Raleigh, Mrs. Atkinson organized a number of prayer circles.

As one who was in one of these has said: "It was, in every sense, a school of prayer; the blessing came not only in the results of the meetings, but in the revelation to the women who took part in these circles."

Her interest was not confined to her own church, but she gathered together a number of ladies, from all churches, who invited Miss May N. Blodgett of Detroit to hold a series of Bible readings in Monroe in the spring. These meetings were held with the deepest interest from the 20th of May to the 4th of June, and as a result a permanent Bible class of forty members or more was organized, to begin regular weekly meetings in the fall. The ladies felt that no one but Mrs. Atkinson could profitably teach the class, and so, with deep reluctance, she accepted that as one of her obligations for the coming year.

With Mrs. Darwin James of Brooklyn, president of the Woman's Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, and a long-known friend of the Bridges family, Frances had often talked about her heartfelt longing for the Christian education of Southern girls, and how, some time, a broad work could be brought about for them. What the Northern Presbyterian church was doing in its schools at Asheville was always of deepest interest to her, and she had been at the institutions, both as secretary and for personal visits, many times. The Normal and Industrial College at Albemarle, Stanley Coun-

ty, was also in the circle of her immediate care. Mr. Atkinson and she visited the school together in April, and she spoke to the girls in regard to the Young Women's Christian Association movement and the ways in which girls could develop a higher Christian life. The next year another friend was visiting the school and found there the beginnings of a little organization. The girls said: "Mr. Atkinson brought his wife here, and she told us about the Y. W. C. A., and we want an Association of our own. Oh, she was so lovely!"

En route to Albemarle they traveled with a little orphan girl from the Episcopal Orphanage in Charlotte, of whom Mrs. Atkinson wrote:

"Mr. Atkinson and I met the superintendent with her at the station. She was about ten years old and had the sweetest expression in her face when it brightened. She was going to Danville, and I had to leave her at Salisbury, and when I kissed her good-bye, she put her arms around me in a quick, impulsive way, and gave me a convulsive little hug. I hope she is going where people will love her, and I believe they will, for the superintendent was such a kind man he would have investigated the home."

"She doeth little kindnesses

That most leave undone or despise,
For naught that sets one heart at ease
And bringeth happiness or peace,
Is low esteemèd in her eyes."

When it was understood that Miss Bridges would settle in the Carolinas after her marriage, she was

most heartily invited to a place on the State Executive Committee of the Young Women's Christian Association and asked at the very first to be its chairman. This she felt unable to do, but, after the annual meeting of the Charlotte Association, which she addressed with great power, the ladies who had the work in charge felt that they could undertake it successfully only with one of her experience and ability as chairman. She finally consented, and in March took up these duties. The first of April Mrs. Atkinson presided over a state council at headquarters. On that day she enjoyed talking with Miss Stephenson, from the Home Industrial School at Asheville, who had been for many years the treasurer of the state committee, of her own early experiences when traveling among the Southern Associations. Other dear friends were upon the committee, which made this gathering very personal and attractive. She and the state secretary, Miss Inez Kinney, had arranged the program for the day, including, besides the more technical topics, "The Power of the Asheville Conference to Transform Lives" and "The Relation of Prayer to Work." Mrs. Atkinson herself spoke that day on "The Relation of the State Committee to the National and World's Committees and to the Local Association." She explained how the state committee represents the local Associations, though it does not in any way control them. Its work is: First, to study the conditions of the whole

territory, in order to learn where help is needed; and to stand in closest sympathy with existing Associations through correspondence and visits of the traveling secretaries and of any of the members of the state committee who can go out and become acquainted with the various local branches; second, to assist in forming Associations in colleges, cities, and mill villages, whenever the students or the people of the town desire such an organization; third, to supervise the work of the various local Associations, never sending the secretary unless an invitation has been received, though sometimes an indication may be given that if such an invitation were extended it would probably be accepted.

The local Associations elect the national committee members at the biennial conventions, they make voluntary pledges to that movement at the time of the summer conferences, and are urged by the state committee to be loyal to the national movement.

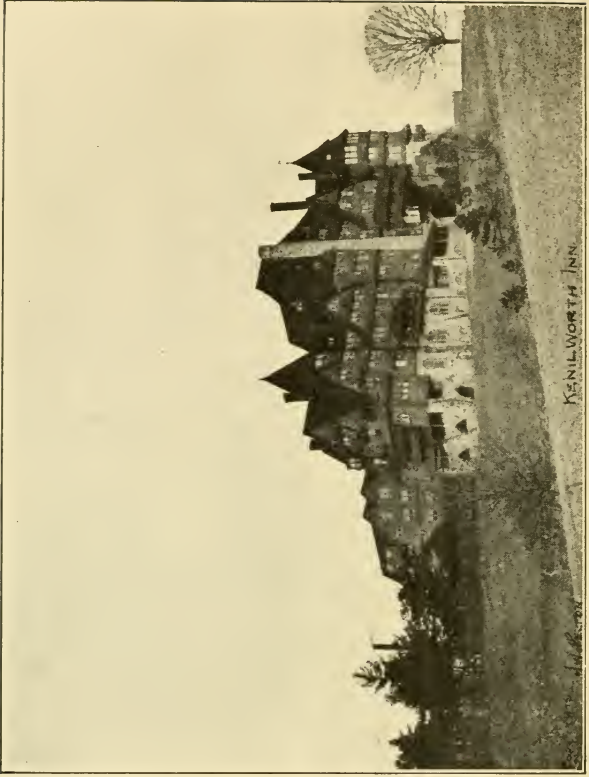
To show the necessity for activity in the student world, she cited instances of young women not brought into vital relations with Christ in college, and their influence later on: one, a girl not a Christian, who married a Christian young man with the understanding that he should take no part in the work of his church; another whose husband and young son joined the church on confession of faith, but received no help in the home toward growth in Christian life; another, a young woman so narrow-

mind in her sectarian interpretations that, because her own denomination was not represented in the town, she would identify herself with no church and offered no service to Christ.

It was Mrs. Atkinson's dear hope that the Young Women's Christian Association movement in the Carolinas could be a work of Carolina women. It had long been dependent on Northern help, and since she had become a Southern woman herself she hoped to make it a truly independent committee.

One of the greatest joys of her married life was attendance upon the fifth Student Volunteer convention, held in Nashville, Tennessee, February 28 to March 4, 1906. Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson chaperoned one Pullman car of students, containing the delegations from eight Carolina colleges, and on their way they spent some hours in Atlanta at the home of Mrs. A. McD. Wilson, the chairman of the Gulf States Committee, whose hospitality Miss Bridges in her traveling days had enjoyed again and again.

Mr. Atkinson had co-operated with the Young People's Missionary movement since its inception, and knew many of the general missionary leaders, as well as the religious workers of the South. His wife had visited the various schools and colleges in Nashville a number of times in her regular work as secretary and had attended both state and national conventions there. The city was full of her friends. At the opening session of the convention Mr. and



Mrs. Atkinson sat in the Carolinas' section of the balcony, recognizing and greeting acquaintances in the interval before the program began, but after this they accepted seats on the great platform, near which they held a perpetual reception before and after every session. There were hundreds of young women from the various colleges who had known of Miss Bridges' marriage and who wished to have a personal word with her; there were hundreds of people to whom Mr. Atkinson wished to introduce his bride, and the whole week of the convention was a time of the greatest personal delight, as well as a time of absorbing interest in the convention itself. Her sister Margaret was with the Smith College delegation. The sisters never met each other again.

This is the last time that many of her friends saw Frances Bridges Atkinson, the only time that most of them saw her after her marriage. It is a memory that they cherish of her, to whom her friends were an inexpressibly close part of her life. "I feel, sometimes," she once said, "as if I did not deserve the friendships I have, because I do not think as often of my friends as I should"; yet her devotion to her friends was unusual. In no pressure of business, of home cares, in no absorbing personal issues, in no time of exaltation or of shrinking towards God in emergency, had she ever forgotten the friends whom she loved and whom she served: "Her love was measured by the wine poured forth."

VI

LONG GOOD-BYES ARE HARD

WHEN the first plans were made for the Southern Conference of 1906 Mrs. Atkinson was instantly thought of as one of the speakers whose presence through the whole conference would be of inestimable value.

This Asheville Conference had always made a strong appeal to her. Possibly, it was because it was the first conference to which she had gone as a secretary; possibly because she was familiar with the colleges from which the delegations came, and because she had been rejoiced to see the city Associations spring up in the cities through which she had traveled some years before; possibly because she knew the gratifying results of the previous conferences as they had been revealed by the later lives of the young women in attendance, and possibly because of her intimate acquaintance with the members of the state committees represented at that conference, with whom she had worked closely as a state secretary and into whose conventions and local Associations she had been repeatedly welcomed.

She found, too, everything there that could appeal to one who loved beauty and calm of outlook. The situation of Kenilworth Inn, where the conference of 1906 was entertained, commands a magnificent prospect of mountains and hills. There are blazing glories of sunset and wonderful spectacles of cloud-effects. There is the cool nearness of the shady woods and winding mountain roads to invite to long walks and picturesque drives.

Mrs. Atkinson had looked forward to the conference and planned most carefully, as was her wont, for the address she was to make on the opening evening. It was she who had chosen the conference motto: John 10:10 and 17:3. "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

She left home Thursday morning, June 7, with Miss Theresa Wilbur, her successor in the student work of The American Committee. They spent part of the day with friends in Charlotte. The ride and the luncheon and the pleasant social intercourse were spoken of most happily in a letter written that night. It was Mrs. Atkinson's plan to return to Monroe after the conference, and then to come back with Mr. Atkinson for the Young People's Missionary Movement Conference, June 29th to July 9th. After July 14th they were to go to Conklin, New

York, to spend the remainder of the summer with her family.

She was most glad to find at the Inn the chairman of The American Committee, Mrs. J. S. Griffith, and the leaders and managers of the conference, all of whom had been her colleagues until a few months past. Friday morning and afternoon were spent quietly resting and preparing her address for the evening. Shortly before going down to speak, she asked the secretaries to come together for a little time of prayer. She wrote then to Mr. Atkinson:

"It is Friday evening, and I am just about to start for the meeting. I know you have been praying for me and I am sure of God's blessing upon the message, but I long not to disappoint Him at one little point by trusting in myself, or the outline, or in any way hindering Him."

The meeting was the first assembling of the conference delegates—young women from the colleges and cities of the lower Atlantic States, the Gulf States, and Tennessee and Kentucky, women on city boards and college faculties.

As she arose to speak, her voice was strong and clear. The young women who had only heard of her, as well as her own friends, were caught by her beauty and by her conviction that she had experienced the very life that she was portraying to them. The theme, one of her favorite subjects, was:

THE CHOICE OF THE BEST.

(Luke 10:38-42.)

“Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord’s feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said: ‘Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me.’ But the Lord answered and said unto her: ‘Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’”

“First, let us rid our minds of the conception that Jesus praised the life of meditation over the life of activity. We have an intimation that Mary had been helping Martha with the serving, for Martha said: ‘My sister hath left me to serve alone.’

“Picture to your minds an extra guest in the family—the preparation for such an one, and realize how Martha felt, that Mary had left her to serve alone. Mary had chosen the part of truest courtesy, that of going to enjoy her guest.

“Both of these women were what we would call Christian women. God loved them both. This is not a contrast between Christian and non-Christian, but rather that one chose the highest type of Christian living. It was not the choice of an ascetic life, away from the world; not a narrow, unhappy life, but a joyous life. ‘These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full.’ John 15:11. The best life in Jesus Christ is the most radiantly joyful life.

"This was also a true life. Martha illustrates the class of people who say that because they honestly *think* a thing is right, it *is* right. Martha was so sure that she was right, she had not begun to know the truer part of service. Do not be perfectly sure that what you think is right, unless you are sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning of Him through His word.

"It was a real life, too, not that superficial, uncertain life. Jesus was teaching deep things. He said: 'Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.'

"Religion must not be, and is not, a thing set off by itself. Spiritualize the every-day things of life. Does He not tell us this in these words: 'Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'

"Everything we do in life should be for some definite aim. True education consists in: 1. Mental discipline; 2. Discernment; 3. Helping other people. A superficial education must react on the religious life. The teaching of Jesus concerned everything in every-day life.

"This choice of the best is a choice of the life of communion. It is being lived by some of the busiest people, who take advantage of every opportunity for a few moments' chat with the Lord Jesus, and who faithfully keep every day the Morning Watch. To pray means, as Mary appreciated that day, to come into the presence of Jesus Christ. Some think this is vague and mystical, but it is not if, as you go to prayer, you say thoughtfully and meaningly: 'I have now come into the presence of the Lord Jesus; I have come to hear, to have Him speak to me.' He has said in His word: 'Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto thee.' Then say: 'I am drawing near unto God; He must be drawing near to me.' You may not *feel* this. The feeling is not essential. That

manifestation will come when God wills. His presence is just as real. All you need to do is to reach out your hand through faith."

When she had come apparently almost to the close of her address she became faint, hesitated, and then took her seat, saying: "I am all right, but I must have been more tired than I thought." After a moment or two, she was assisted to an adjoining veranda by the nurse and the conference physician (her own medical attendant from Charlotte). Dr. Lincoln Hulley, one of the conference Bible teachers sitting on the platform, instantly rose and continued the thread of the discourse, and then brought the meeting to a close. Mrs. Atkinson did not get better, and was carried upstairs to her room. For a time she seemed much more comfortable, but about midnight the doctor, having failed to get a satisfactory response from the treatment, sent for a consulting physician who, when he arrived, said everything had been done that could be done. Several hours passed, in which she seemed to suffer hardly any pain. She was conscious, though she said little—only inquiring whether her friends had been sent for, and speaking courteously to those who were attending upon her. Shortly after daylight the physician asked if she would like to have Mrs. Griffith pray with her. She nodded assent. Very soon after this she calmly and sweetly breathed her last.

Without good-bye to her friends? With none of

her family about her? Yes, and that was the saddest thought in many hearts at the moment they heard she had left them. Once she had written a hostess in whose hospitality she had taken pleasure:

“I don’t think I said good-bye to your daughter. But she will understand. And perhaps it was just as well, for long good-byes are hard.”

So she, who never doubted for one instant that God’s ways are perfect, went to Him when He called, and as He appointed. There was no sadness of farewell when she put out to sea. What she had said to a dearly loved academy girl who was mourning for her mother, she would have been willing her own friends should remember when they were mourning for her:

“In any case, this bereavement will work out for good to those who love Him. Perhaps I would better explain that conditional clause. God certainly does not send all the sickness in the world, but just as Jesus Christ was always especially near the sick and needy, the Spirit of God, I believe, comes especially to the sick and suffering with the divine power to heal, or the tender comfort to lead through the shadow of the Valley of Death, when men will let Him. And if God did not purpose this, and it came through carelessness or ignorance, still His loving heart is planning that all good to those who love Him shall come from it, whatever has happened or will happen.”

On this Saturday morning, after breakfast, the delegates were asked to come together in the audience room, and there, where they had last met, and where they had heard her words of the possibility of intimate communion with the beloved Lord, they heard that she had entered into visible communion with Him, and that the better part which she had chosen was now hers without limitation. Later in the day Mr. Atkinson arrived, accompanied by friends.

The burial was in Baltimore, in beautiful Green Mount Cemetery. Here, among the trees and the flowers upon the grassy inclines, where many members of the family had previously been laid to rest, sorrowing friends and relatives left all that was mortal of one who had been to them the dearest and most precious creature in life.

Dr. Howerton, of Charlotte, a devoted friend of Mr. and Mrs. Atkinson, conducted the funeral service. Dr. John Timothy Stone, pastor of the Brown Memorial Church of Baltimore, who had known Miss Bridges in her visits to the Woman's College of Baltimore and in her conference work, spoke of the life not that she had lived, but that she was living:

"The life seems closed, but every heart is speaking of her now in the conscious language of love. We need not say simply her life was beautiful, her life *is* beautiful, and the Master whom she loved and represented lives and

will live more really in all of us because we saw Him in her."

He closed with the little poem of Maltbie D. Babcock:

EMANCIPATION.

"Why be afraid of Death as though your life were breath?
Death but anoints your eyes with clay. Oh, glad surprise!

"Why should you be forlorn? Death only husks the corn.
Why should you fear to meet the thresher of the wheat?

"Is sleep a thing to dread? Yet, sleeping, you are dead
Till you awake and rise, here, or beyond the skies.

"Why should it be a wrench to leave your wooden bench?
Why not with happy shout run home when school is out?

"The dear ones left behind! Oh, foolish one and blind!
A day—and you will meet; a night—and you will greet!

"This is the death of Death, to breathe away a breath
And know the end of strife, and taste the deathless life,

"And joy without a fear, and smile without a tear,
And work, nor care, nor rest, and find the last the best."

One of the first effects of her beautiful translation was that upon the conference itself. The testimonies at the closing meeting showed that for some their

previous fear of death had been removed, as they thought of her, radiant when she had spoken to them, and now still more radiant in the presence of her Lord. Some one said later :

“Though not thirty years of age and still a bride, her beautiful life seems complete to me, for I cannot conceive of a more perfect rounding out of it than has been achieved, and, as I see her addressing the members of the Association when her spirit took its flight, she appears to me like a brave runner who, having finished the course, stands before the judge for the crown. Crowned she now is most certainly, for she has fought a good fight, she has finished the course, she has kept the faith.”

On the last Sunday a memorial service was held, opened by Scripture reading and prayer by Mrs. Griffith. Miss Cratty, the leader of the conference, said: “I remember one thing in particular which she said at the conference last year—‘Choose, not to choose again.’ This which she herself exhorted us to do she has done.” The secretaries and other officers of the Southern state committees spoke: Miss Anna Casler, who had known her as a fellow student in Smith College; Miss Helen Coale of the Virginias, who had first known her when she herself was a disappointed girl unable to go to college. Miss Bridges had said to her: “I believe you will go to college yet, and I will pray that you may go.” Miss Emily Huntington, of Tennessee and Kentucky, also was of Miss Bridges’ college. They had been at a

summer conference together in a great delegation, but Miss Bridges, though one of the busiest and most conspicuous members, had found out this young obscure girl in order to be of service to her. Miss Kinney, who had known her in the relation of state secretary to state chairman and who had been in her home in Monroe, spoke of this that she had said:

"I don't believe God would have given me this happy home if He had not meant me to share it with some one else."

Once, after a discouraging report had been received, she wrote:

"We never know just what God does with our work, and I have come to believe that it is a sin to doubt that God does use us if our lives are truly consecrated to Him."

Miss Simms and Miss Taylor, her former colleagues on the national staff, spoke of her prayer-life and her sympathy. "Her life was not unusual; it was simple and normal. It can be summed up in one sentence—she was a Spirit-filled woman."

Memorial services were also held at the Silver Bay Student Conference, in which she had been an active worker several preceding summers, and in the church at Monroe, at the time the delegates from that city reported the Asheville Conference.

The formal resolutions and the hundreds of per-

sonal letters that followed the announcement of her death all united in testimony to her unselfishness, her devotion, and her humility.

This interest of friends has been continued in various memorial undertakings—a scholarship at the Training Institute for Secretaries in the Young Women's Christian Association, another in the Home Industrial School at Asheville, in the Young Women's Christian Association's memorial rooms in Asheville and Charlotte, and in the Normal and Industrial College of Albemarle, North Carolina; a memorial chapel in the Orphanage for Girls, maintained by the home mission committee of the Asheville Presbytery in the town of Balfour, twenty miles from Asheville; and in Kunsan, Korea, the Frances Bridges Atkinson Hospital. The head nurse of this hospital, in which nearly nine thousand patients were treated in 1907, was a member of Mr. Atkinson's church in Monroe when she volunteered for the mission-field. It would be Frances Bridges Atkinson's wish that the girls and women educated or helped through these means should think not of her when they hear her name, but of Him whom she lifted up that He might draw all unto Himself.

“Death could not change her, who was all of life—
 Its power, and beauty, and immortal love;
 Death was a thing apart from her, whose spirit,
 A white and burning flame, unquenched has leapt
 To meet and blend with the eternal Light.

"Sick hearts, be strong; and eyes yet blind with grief,
Look to the heavens above you, where 'tis writ
That Light and Life and Love, these three, are one
Divine, imperishable element.

So all our essences are one, and she
Whose life was purest light and love, is now,
Though glorified, immutably the same
As when she moved among us. Lord, we thank Thee."



WEST PRESBYTERIAN MANSE, BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY

VII

THE SECRET OF HER INFLUENCE

WHENEVER two friends of Frances Bridges Atkinson begin speaking of her, they are sure to say: "I think the secret of her influence was this or that." "It must be because of her prayerfulness, or her humility, or her love for the Word of God, that she had so great a power with girls."

There are many who believe that the source of her power was her constant, absolutely unwavering faith in God as an answerer of prayer. She kept a long prayer list, changing it from time to time as the petitions were answered or as others were added. These were some of the requests that she had been making the last days of her life for different friends who had asked her prayers:

- "That she may be led to do God's will";
- "That she may have more loyalty to the Bible";
- "For her work as a faculty member";
- "For a deeper hunger and thirst after righteousness";
- "That she may know God's disposition in regard to this work";

"That she may learn the power of intercessory prayer and how to carry Christ to others";

"That she may rest in the Lord";

"That she may live just for God's praise";

"That the study of Thessalonians may be an especial blessing at this particular time";

"That she may grow naturally";

"That the whole Cabinet, as well as the President, may never cause the Spirit of God to cease His power in their Association";

"That she may be kept true to her decision, and that God may use her life accordingly";

"That the peace of God may be in her heart."

One of her friends asked her one day how she knew the wisest way to bring a girl to a definite decision for Christ, and the answer furnishes the keynote of her entire life. She said:

"I never attempt to help a girl but I ask the Lord to speak through me, and even between sentences I keep praying for the right thought and the right words to express it."

"Prayer as a Working Force" was a favorite expression, and many times was the burden of an address to college women:

"God's part in our work—our part, not 'God helping me,' Christ's promise about prayer—'Ask whatsoever ye will.'"

"General ignoring of this and the sinfulness of the failure."

"The conditions on which receiving is based:

"(1) Abiding—John 15. Keeping His Commandments,
1 John.

"(a) Forgiving—Mark 11:25.

"(b) Unobtrusive prayer.

"Note.—'Use not vain repetitions.' 'Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.'

"(2) 'In my name,' as if Christ were asking something according to my will.

"Three ways of looking at this:

"(a) Not knowing God's will in the matter, pray with a willingness to submit to it.

"(b) When His word tells you His will.

"The extension of His kingdom in one's college or in the whole world.

"Your own purity and growth.

"Unity of purpose in the cabinet. That they all may be one.

"For Bible classes.

"(c) When the Spirit of God puts into your heart the conviction of His will.

"Starting a prayer circle for spiritual awakening.

"A new building.

"Sending a delegation to conference or convention.

"Pray. Use this as your greatest working force. Keep on praying."

One of the Moravian brethren insisted to John Wesley: "The religion of Jesus is not a solitary religion. You must bring some one with you if you expect to enter Heaven." Frances Bridges did not pray alone, she was a member of several prayer cir-

cles for different purposes, and many, many less developed Christians she really taught to pray as Christ taught His disciples. Her schedule was sent each month to friends, to secure their intercession for the colleges and conventions to which she was to go. She showed young women that she loved and trusted them by urging them to undertake spiritual responsibility and then leading them step by step. This is shown in her correspondence:

“ . . . In praying for this friend, ask to be shown for what to pray, just where the difficulty lies. It may lie in her not taking what God is holding out to her. It may be that that secret reason has something—much—to do with it, although she does not realize either now. I am doing this, too; get her to do the same. The greatest work you do is when you pray. May the truth of that become more and more a part of your life and mine! . . . ”

Like Brother Lawrence, she practiced the presence of Christ continually and felt His help in everything she undertook. When some one asked her one day about keeping the Morning Watch, she said:

“Of course, the time to talk with God is at the beginning of the day. You tune the piano before you play on it, instead of waiting until after the music has been spoiled.”

Nothing else was ever so important as this engagement with her Lord. The only occasions when her exquisite consideration for others might seem to

fail was when the hour of breakfast, or of some early appointment, conflicted with the time set apart for this daily worship. That her very presence brought benediction, as one said who worked with her long and closely, was the natural outcome of this sitting still in God's presence before going into any other company.

Her unselfishness was another striking trait, and this was revealed both by her humility and courtesy. She was a perfect guest. One in whose home she visited frequently once said:

"We never had in our home a guest so delightful and so easy to entertain. Her supreme thoughtfulness was manifest here as everywhere. She was so appreciative, so happy, so loving, and so perfectly frank about her preferences when asked, that she could not fail to be a constant delight."

Her thoughtfulness was marked, especially in the little things so often overlooked by those who have much less than she to claim their attention. A visitor to Thomas Carlyle's house in London remarked that in his correspondence there exhibited she was most struck by the notes he sent with his birthday gifts to his wife. He might, she commented, have sent gifts without infringing on the general reputation he had established for himself, but that he accompanied them with the intimate and affectionate jottings there present was a revelation of

an entirely different person from what she had thought the Sage of Chelsea to be. But Frances Bridges' affectionate spirit in offering and her appreciation in receiving a gift were exactly consistent with her whole life. You knew, from reading her note of acknowledgment, that the impression was perfectly distinct. A bundle of letters to a friend in a neighboring suburb, who often brought flowers for her to the national office, shows that she never forgot. The acknowledgment was not of "flowers," but of "dog-tooth violets" or "pansies" or "asters."

This courtesy and graciousness made a strong appeal to elderly people. A secretary at the Carolinas convention in 1906 said that during the convention days an old lady called her, as she was passing through the audience, and said: "Tell me, where is that sweet young woman who used to be the secretary—Miss Bridges?" I replied: "She is in Heaven." The old lady's eyes filled with tears. "Tell me about it," she said, but as it was time for the next meeting to begin I only said: "Over on the publication table you will find a paper—*The Evangel*—with an account of her life." The next morning the lady was again at the convention, and as I passed her she spoke up quickly, "I read it," and gave my hand an earnest pressure. Again her eyes filled with tears. "I don't know who she was at all," the secretary added, "but I know that some time Frances Bridges had touched her with such a

touch that years had failed to make her forget the beauty of the life."

The very statement of her life-motto—"He must increase, but I must decrease"—shows the spirit in which she undertook all her service, and the very thought of her unselfishness, of not expecting many things for herself, of gratitude for such results and blessings as came, gave her a poise and a restfulness as unusual as it was beautiful. This quiet restfulness always pervaded her life, even amid the strain and weariness of her traveling. She always appeared at peace with God and with herself. It was infinitely more to her to keep her poise and be quiet than to catch a train, if that meant being unduly hurried.

A co-worker, who was first attracted to her because of her personality and simplicity of expression and bearing, was greatly impressed, as the years deepened their acquaintance, by the fact of her humility. She once said, in regard to the national field:

"I am ready to lay this work down to-morrow, if some one else will do it better."

This humility was one reason why the ministry of intercession was more sought by her than public service, although she took her place in this with others.

It is difficult to give a name to one of her strongest characteristics, a certain simplicity, the child spirit in ordinary matters, as well as simplicity toward Christ, which manifested her religious life. Says a friend :

“Rare and beautiful in all its attributes as her life was, to me the most noticeable quality, and the most helpful, was the childlike simplicity of her mind and heart in its attitude toward God. I have never seen Christ’s bidding that we be as little children so completely exemplified in the life of any mature Christian. To pray with her was to be lifted in a rare way into the very presence of the Father, where she, as a loving child sure of His love, talked with Him as if face to face, in the simplest, most straightforward way, of the immediate need of her life. I shall never forget my first time of prayer with her at Geneva, where we plead with God for a mutual friend. God was made real and tender in a new way that has made my own prayer-life far more intimate and simple. And every time that my life touched hers thereafter I bore away something helpful. My memory of her is a live and blessed one, bright with the sunshine of God’s love, and tender with recollections of the frank and happy outgivings of her friendship.”

This called forth the very best in other people. The purity of her life and the Christ-like tenderness made it simply impossible to be mean or petty in her presence. You thought your purest thoughts and acted your noblest when with her.

With all this simplicity of mind, there was a firm-

ness about making decisions. This was true even when such a decision might call forth criticism, since people might think she had taken a step that assumed a higher plane of living than they had yet been led to experience or desire; but the very fact that those about her knew her humility made it impossible to credit any such assumption on her part.

Her trust in God was boundless. "God is here, and girls are naturally turning to Him" was her explanation of an earnest spiritual awakening in which she took part. Her high expectation that what was worked for would come gave a steadiness to any course upon which she had settled through prayer.

"I am sure, from an experience I am constantly going through, that God expects us to *trust* Him to bring about the result of our life, while, as a friend of mine put it in a letter, 'we want fruit in blossom-time,' almost all of us who are really in earnest."

The term "saintly" can be used of few with any degree of appropriateness; but it can be applied absolutely to Frances Bridges Atkinson, because her life was quiet and joyous and free from all strain of morbidness, and illustrated the normal Christian experience, which by its very rarity seems to savor of the other world, that land of far distances where now she sees the King in His beauty. Still, this saintliness was not due to absence of lower possibilities. She acknowledges that she had always had in

her life one great and overwhelming temptation. It was the temptation of an ambition which longed to be first, which led her to want to do and to be better than another could do or be. She said that if she were not a Christian she would have been overpowered with this insatiate ambition, but the power of God had been helping her to conquer.

Another most marked characteristic was her capacity for taking pains. She was a hard worker. A state secretary tells that, after she had taken part in a number of the services of Sunday at a convention, she had talked on her homeward way with a young woman who was trying hard to come to some important decision, and then, though it was late at night, she realized that this new state secretary had been waiting for advice and counsel, and she felt that she must give her that before she slept. In all her correspondence and conversation there was a nice faithfulness to any work given her to do, no matter what its requirements. Every task, especially her letter-writing, had her full attention.

One young woman writes her :

“Why is it fair for the Lord to allow people to be saved because their friends pray for them, when there are so many who have no friends to pray for them and must perhaps go unsaved for that reason?”

Miss Bridges took time to explain the teaching of the Scriptures on this, the question of bare salvation

and true Christian development, Christ's teaching in regard to prayer and the responsibility of the individual, as well, to come willingly to God, and ends by saying:

"I am glad to hear you say also that you have given up examining yourself and have determined just to go on doing as nearly as you can what you think Christ would wish. To have God examine us is one thing, to examine ourselves is another. We should always stand open to the first, but the second results only in morbidity."

Another student writes inquiring about Christian development and how she can obtain the right motives in her Christian life. Miss Bridges answers:

"It is the simple obedience to Christ's commands, because He commands them, that brings us into touch with Him and then gives us a sense of joy and love for His work. You might do all the things that you have heard other people say you ought to do, in order to develop the Christian life, and yet not feel any more joy, nor have any more sense of the reality of Jesus Christ; but if you will start in and say: 'I will obey because Christ commands it, I want Christ in my life, I want to know Him better, I want Him to actuate my life with motives,' and so seek to please Him rather than to do right, the love and pleasure and interest in His work will grow."

To another young woman, who was concerned because she was not able at once to enter a definite form of Christian work, she said:

"If you can work at home in your own church for a year or two, and then teach, doing lines of Christian work in the midst of your teaching, God will just prepare you through the openings that He gives in these intervening years and you will not be so disappointed as if you tried to rush into the work before you are sufficiently mature."

One of her closest friends speaks of her painstaking labor in the preparation of addresses. These usually grew out of her own personal Bible study and the truth which God's Word was revealing to her at the time she was preparing to speak. She prayed much during this construction. There were careful notes made and kept, and yet when the hour of speaking arrived the words came rather from the heart and its meditations than from the head and its reasons. Her deliberate aim was permanency and fruitfulness rather than amount accomplished. She was willing to spend hours with one individual, if the result would mean the conversion of the young woman, or the surrender of her life.

An absolute love of the Scriptures permeated everything she said or did. Her papers are full of slips with Scripture quotations written out in detail, which she evidently wished to study in connection with some subject. Many of the outlines of her addresses are simply arrangements of logically connected Scripture passages:

"He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ, our Savior."

"Having cleansed it by the washing of water by His word."

"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

"But we all, with unveiled faces beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed unto the same image from glory to glory even as from the Lord the Spirit."

One of the secretaries who frequently traveled with her said: "She fed upon God's Word. She would lose herself in Bible study as we traveled. After an interruption, such as changing cars, she immediately returned with zest to her study."

That study was often a sort of communion with God. It was not so much preparation for a distinct talk as for her personal work. She was studying that she might know how to meet the objections made by girls who were unwilling to give themselves to Christ. She used this knowledge of the Scriptures in giving advice to young women personally. A student secretary, who met her first at a summer conference, had been talking with her about making a decision for the foreign field. Miss Bridges gave her a verse which spoke to the girl's heart in such a way that she felt her faith was anchored and that her decision would stand.

"That verse, the sixteenth of the forty-second chapter of Isaiah," the girl wrote later, "has been a help many,

many times since, and when I knew that she could come to the state convention at our college town I was simply delighted that the other girls might have the same power come into their lives. She made such an impression that the dean of our college kept asking me, as president of our Association, if it could not be arranged to have Miss Bridges visit the college."

And what she gave to individuals she gave also as advice for an Association. She writes to a university, where funds for a building were to be raised:

"I have been reading something on the money problem that deepened the conviction of which I spoke to you the other day and that makes me suggest to you that as soon as you can, you make a study of the old tabernacle and the way in which the money was raised there, and also the same subject during the apostolic days. Here are just a few references: 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; 2 Corinthians 9:6-14; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Philippians 4:19."

Her view about Bible study was expressed in the answer to a letter:

"Am I not on the right track when I expect to obtain spiritual food from my Bible study? Have I not a right to expect spiritual growth by my study? Yes, if you are expecting it to come from Christ—the loving Christ—rather than from the book. It is possible to seek *light* rather than life. But in Him was life and the life was the light of men. The Bible is just the series of God's letters to us—to use a figure you will surely understand.

Now, if you mean your second question as I have understood it, I do not think it is true. Is not the only way one can come into closer and more vital touch with Jesus Christ that of communion, and is not that communion obtained only by prayer and Bible study? Do you remember the saying, 'Communion without service is a dream—service without communion, ashes'? God is revealed to us through our service for Him, as well as through our communion with Him. By service I mean helping those outside your own family circle, and, if possible, someone in darkness or sorrow, and while I want you to keep right along with your Bible study and prayer, I am going to tell you not to try each thing I suggest as a new remedy, but just do them as a part of God's commands, and trust Him to give the blessing of revelation when it seems best. It will probably take you unawares."

We are told that, in the prayer-meetings of the early church, the petitions were not made that the events of this day or to-morrow might be taken care of, or for the minor blessings which are incident to the Christian life, but in those meetings the believers prayed that God would lay a burden for souls upon each of them. This burden for souls was laid upon Frances Bridges until her life was aflame with her devotion to personal work. It made no difference who it was that was in need. At one of the summer conferences a young woman of very limited opportunities came to her knowledge, and Miss Bridges gave as much time and thought, and worked as hard to bring this girl into obedience to Christ, as though she were one of the leaders of a great college com-

munity, with every possibility of intellectual and social influence. She saw there an immortal soul, and, like Christ, she was not too busy or too tired, in the midst of summer conference days, to pause and help one to find her prophet, her Messiah, and her personal Savior.

During many visits to colleges, Miss Bridges found that the hindrance in the way of the advancement of Christ's claim in these institutions was the fact that the nominally Christian girls, and even the officers of the Association, had so little vital touch with Christ. In one woman's college, where the visit had been full of discouragement, a strong young faculty member said to her: "I am afraid, Miss Bridges, that this visit is not very satisfactory to you. What do you think is the greatest difficulty here?" Miss Bridges looked at her thoughtfully and sadly, and responded: "You are." Her personal work was truly individual, in that she left each young woman to work out her own problem. She did not advocate wholesale measures. Because a conference had been the very gate of Heaven to a student who came with a prepared mind, she would not encourage that student to believe that a similar conference would effect similar developments for a student of different temperament or degree of spiritual concern.

And others learned of her, as she prayed that God

would help them to see some girls who needed Christ.

“ . . . I think Drummond's 'Natural Law in the Spiritual World' will help you to understand what is lacking in such a girl as you describe. I think you help some people to feel their need of Christ by realizing yourself that the true Christian life is something different from other lives. As Christians we do not realize that enough, and so people think that moral and attractive virtues are themselves the Christian life. But that chapter on 'Ye must be born again' will explain it. The next chapter on 'Growth,' too, is very good.

“I believe you did the right thing when you asked your friend if she were willing to be made willing. That was practically what you did in asking her to pray *to want*. The difficulty is that she is spiritually asleep, and these yearnings are but the efforts to awaken her. She needs to be startled into waking. One way to do that is just through a simple suggestion—don't be shocked or hurt (seemingly) at any position she takes. From her point of view she could quite honestly say that she believed there would be plenty of time. And, don't you know, as far as time to get into heaven—that is, to live here in years of preparation—she probably has what seems like a good deal. But the trouble there is that she *cannot* come to Christ just *when* she *wants*. That sad thing is true. The Spirit of Christ does not strive with us forever. Don't let her think so much of the future results. But show her the verses in John 3 and 4 and 6, to show that life comes only through Christ (it is a present-tense matter), that without Him ('Whosoever obeyeth not—believeth not—the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God *abideth* on him')—there is no life:

"May God speak through even the tones of your voice and lead you to say this or something else, whatever is His will, to her."

The recent biography of an English clergyman declares that the world admires men for what they give it, but rarely for themselves. It was not so with Frances Bridges Atkinson. Her whole teaching was that men's work should be an expression of what they are. "How to Live as a Christian" was a favorite theme for conference addresses. Her commonplace-book was filled with such extracts as these, stamped with her approval:

"In the preacher three things must preach: heart, mouth, and life. The life must illustrate what the mouth speaks, and the mouth must speak what the heart feels."

"The most excellent way Brother Lawrence had found of going to God was that of doing our common business without any view of pleasing men, and purely for the love of God."

"Spirituality is best manifested on the ground, not in the air. Rapturous day-dreams, flights of heavenly fancy, longings to see the invisible, are less expensive and less expressive than the plain doing of duty. To have bread excite thankfulness, and a drink of water send the heart to God, is better than sighs for the unattainable. To plough a straight furrow on Monday, or dust a room well on Tuesday, or kiss a bumped forehead on Wednesday, is worth more than the most ecstatic thrill under Sunday eloquence. Spirituality is seeing God in common things, and showing God in common tasks."

“Are you living for yourself—self-centered? Then you are in the Kingdom of Selfishness. Are you living, on the whole, to make other people happy? Then you are living in what I call the Kingdom of Good-Nature. Are you living to make the world better? Then you are living in the Kingdom of Philanthropy. Are you seeking to do Christ’s work in Christ’s way? Then you are in the Kingdom of Christ.”

She writes to a friend who had been visiting a university where the Association members had been most enthusiastic, while the guest had been disappointed in the meeting:

“I know your coming meant a great deal in spiritual fellowship to those girls. You know it means a great deal to a college girl to see a woman of your personality stand for the things of Christ, as you stand for them. I am more and more convinced that people are far more impressed and helped by what a person is than by what a person says, and they see that even in a short visit.”

In a far-away school in China a young missionary, who had become barely familiar enough with the Chinese language to be at her ease in public reading of the Scriptures, had occasion to lead the meeting of inquirers in the mission, girls from twelve to seventeen years of age. She thought carefully about the central text for the meeting, and finally decided to speak on the forty-fifth Psalm—“The King’s daughter is all glorious within.” The Psalm was exceedingly difficult to read in Chinese,

but she went over it again and again with the Chinese master, in order to use it effectively at the meeting. Of this occasion she wrote:

“I wanted to give my girls an idea of what the Father’s ideal for a woman’s life could be. The girls listened most intently as I told them as I best could of the King’s daughter, her clothing of wrought gold, her very garments fragrant, the King desiring her beauty of mind and of soul as well, and to make it real to them I told them of one whom I had known, God’s own queenly woman—dear Frances Bridges. The native teacher followed my Chinese words, imperfect as I knew they were, but inspired by my thought or by God’s thought, and even then—though I did not know it—the King had called His daughter into His royal presence. The beauty of holiness was completed.”

And thus her life that was forced to choose, in the days of the flesh, between a few years of service in America, or a few years on the foreign mission-field in the Orient, is living and working in spiritual presence in both continents and through the Spirit of God will continue so to work.

